

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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## QUITE ALONE.

BOOK THE SECOND: WOMANHOOD.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. EXIT FRANCIS BLUNT,  
ESQUIRE.

Good papa—it is useless to trouble you with his surname: you would forget it; you have so many names to think of; he appears but for a moment on the stage, and it is sufficient, surely, that he was little Amanda's father, and the guardian of the Edifice on the banks of the Seine—good papa, who was lank and slim, quite of the old school, and whose scanty hair was not innocent of a slight suspicion of powder, sat down with Monsieur Philibert to breakfast. The mightier beefsteak, the more succulent omelette, the stronger red wine, were placed before them. They were helped bountifully, and they ate plentifully. Philibert especially, enjoyed the good things of this life with a gusto which, to the spectator, was well-nigh ravishing. The meat and drink seemed to do him so much good. He a vampire! He a ghoul! He a croque-mort! He seemed a plump-legged and abdominal cherub rather, in spotless linen and a massive watch-chain, feeding on ambrosia, which, as corpulent cherubs must eat, had been solidified for his especial use and benefit. He was a charming man, and talked as charmingly as he reflected himself generously.

"Full, good papa?" he asked, when he had made an end of filling and emptying his own mouth.

"Empty as the mouth of a cannon at the Invalides, when there are no victories to fire salutes for," replied the guardian. "Everything is as bare, là-bas, as the palm of my hand. The Hôtel des Trépassés has not had a lodger for three days."

"Hôtel des Trépassés—good, very good," murmured Philibert. "You have a pleasant wit, good papa: a right pleasant wit. A little more Beaune, if you please. Thank you. It makes one quite chirrup, that little red wine. But business is usually slack at this time of the year, is it not so, papa? In the lively month of June, your heart-broken grisette does not think of charcoal, and hates the sight of a brazier: it is so warm. And then your bankrupt student, your discontented Faust. He is not quite so ready to have done with the great problem when

the schools are about breaking up, and he is going home for the holidays."

"Ma foi! I'm sure I don't know. The seasons don't make so very much difference to us. Bon an, mal an, we have always a fair average of lodgers, winter and summer. It is only the English who make of November a special month for the settlement of their little accounts with Fate."

"Ah! those English. A strange, perverse, intractable race. Hopelessly eccentric are those sons of Albion. They tell me there is no Administration of the Pomps Funèbres in that brumous country, and that their proud and phlegmatic aristocracy, carrying their hereditary spleen even beyond the tomb, have lately taken it into their heads to be buried without the slightest state or ceremony. The morose insularies! Still, do I hear that Monsieur Thiers is making Milord Palmerston listen to reason as to the grand affair—the rendition of the sacred ashes of the Emperor."

"You are growing cracked with your emperor and his sacred ashes, mon gros," the guardian, with good-humoured petulance, observed. "You ask me one question, and then you fly off at a tangent to that eternal St. Helena. It is disrespectful to the Order of Things. It is flying in the face of the dynasty of July."

"Pardon, good papa. Patriotism is, I trust, not incompatible with veneration for the great deeds of times past, and for him the immortal hero. But you were saying——"

"I was saying that between November and June no very great disparity in the number of my lodgers was perceptible. With commendable regularity they continue to patronise the hôtel pretty well all the year round. Our present emptiness, for example, is almost unprecedented. People must be very happy, or the world very peaceable, or the Chapter of Accidents well-nigh exhausted, to account for it."

"It is certainly curious."

"It is more than curious, it is vexatious," good papa, rubbing his ear with some irritation, resumed. "Our usual sources of supply seem to have failed us lately. It is June, certainly, but then don't people go down to St. Cloud, spend their employers' money in reckless dissipation, and cut their throats through remorse next morning? Don't young men hire boats at Asnières in a state of inebriety, capsize their

embarkations in a tipsy attempt to row, and get drowned? Are there no lovers' quarrels at Fontenay-aux-Roses, resulting in the customary laudanum, or the usual and inexpensive branch of a tree? Where is our midsummer harvest from the Bois de Vincennes? Where are our returns from the Forêt de Fontainebleau? And the Palais Royal, and Frascati's—what has become of them? Have half the world been betting on the black, and the other half on the red, and have both red and black turned up alternately, so that both have won? It is incomprehensible. And the assassinations? Is the Cité pulled down? Are there no more bandits in the Rue aux Fèves, no more liberated convicts on the Quai de Billy, no more night-prowlers at the outer barriers? And misery! misery that always exists, that always brings its quota of lodgers to the hôtel. Ma parole d'honneur, je n'y vois guère."

And so the gossips went on. The women-folk had withdrawn to a window, and, softly chatting among themselves, were watching the ever-changing panorama on the river shores beneath. Philibert was telling the guardian, of a grand funeral which took place in the reign of Louis the Eighteenth—a funeral on a raw, cold November day—a day so cold, so raw, that three personages, eminent in French history, standing round the open grave, caught cold, and caught their deaths, too; for they all expired in less than three months afterwards.

"Let me see," prattled Philibert, counting on his fingers; "there was Monsieur Marchangy, he whom Béranger—what a funeral the great poet will have!—castigated so mercilessly dans le temps, ever so long ago. Then there was that distinguished ornament to the bar, Monsieur Robert de Saint-Vincent. And, finally, there was Brillat-Savarin—Savarin the unequalled, the incomparable, the illustrious gastronomical philosopher who—"

"A-a-h!" Lily gave a little scream and ran back, trembling like a frightened fawn, from the window. Amanda followed her, and caught her hand to calm her. Amanda was disturbed by her friend's agitation, but she was not terrified. She had looked from that window too often and too long. Madame Thomas remained immovable: her nose glued, seemingly, to the pane.

"What is it, my child?" cried the guardian, starting up in some alarm.

"What is it, Ma'am'selle Amanda?" the master of the ceremonies echoed. "Perhaps," he continued, mentally, "my eloquence has touched the sympathies of la petite Anglaise. They are very sentimental, these charming misses. Would that the effect the humble Philibert may have made upon her would react on the stony heart of Amanda. Oh! my Amanda, my Amandine!" Monsieur Philibert, be it remembered, was a widower, and more than middle-aged; but he had not yet abandoned all hopes of forming a second matrimonial alliance. A pretty, amiable, well-to-do partner, able to conduct during his absence on official business a genteel mourning establishment, a

maison de deuil, on the Boulevard des Capucines: this was his dream of bliss.

"It is nothing, it is nothing, papa," Amanda hastened to reply to her father's query; "or, rather, it is a mere trifle, a bagatelle; but Ma'am'selle Lily is not used to such sights, and it has frightened her. It is your affair. C'est quelqu'un qu'on porte ici—it is SOMEBODY who is coming, my papa."

Lily had sunk into a chair, and had covered her face with her hands, and was sobbing without tears. The poor little thing was too frightened to cry.

"Is it gone?" she asked, as Amanda bent over her to soothe her.

"You silly little soul, there is nothing to be alarmed at. I live in the midst of such things, and they never trouble me. Papa takes care of all that sort of thing."

Madame Thomas, with her nose to the pane, gave a low prolonged sound, like "haough." Madame Thomas was keen scented; she sniffed the lodger from afar off.

The two men went up, and stood beside her. And then they beheld, beneath them, that of which Lily had caught but a distant glimpse.

First, there was a crowd. Two soldiers, recently conscripted, who had just joined the garrison of Paris, with gaby faces, ill-cut hair, forage-caps yet void of the military manner of setting on, and an inch of shirt visible between the hems of their jackets and the waistbands of their pantaloons. One was munching an apple, and the other was smoking a halfpenny cigar, of course. To them followed a water-carrier, and a cook with her basket full of green-stuff, who had just partaken of a morning sip with the Aquarius aforesaid; a flock of ragged boys in blouses, coming home from a primary school, who were swinging their satchels, and shrilly interchanging criticisms upon Somebody's appearance and odour—especially upon his odour; half a dozen workmen, with pipes in their mouths; and an old gentleman with a straw hat, spectacles, and a blue gingham umbrella, who may have been a member of the Institute, a retired banker, a spy of the police, or a begging-letter writer taking an airing, but who, with his hat, his spectacles, and his umbrella, had formed an integral portion of similar crowds any time these fifty years: at the Federal Pact ceremonial in the Champ de Mars, at the Feast of the Goddess of Reason, at the whipping of Théroigne de Mircourt, at the execution of Robespierre, at the cannonade of the Eighteenth Brumaire, at the explosion of the first Infernal Machine, at the Coronation of Napoleon, at the entry of the Allies into Paris in 'fourteen, at the Champ de Mai in 'fifteen, at the removal of the Horses of St. Mark from the Arch of the Carrousel, at the assassination of the Duke of Berry, at the barricades of July, at the Hôtel de Ville when Jacques Lafayette showed the Duke of Orleans to the mob as "the best of republics," at the riots during the cholera year 'thirty-three, at the funeral of General Lamarque, and the bloody conflict in the Rue de la Tixeranderie, at the raising

of the Obelisk of the Luxor, and the interment of the patriots of July beneath the Column of the Place de la Bastille. He had made one in all these famous crowds, this tranquil old man in the straw hat, and he always had a book under his arm, just purchased for seventy-five centimes on the Quai Voltaire. He had seemingly never changed save in the article of a pigtail, which he wore during the Republic and the Empire, and had cut off soon after the Second Restoration.

This was the crowd. Stay: the gentleman who shaved poodles, and attended to cats on the Pont Neuf, had left his stall in the care of an old woman, and run up just to see what was going on. His temporary absence from duty was perhaps explanatory of that "Va en ville" which, on his signboards, have in our time often mystified us. Stay, once more. Two or three sergents de ville, their swords drawn, kept close to the object which was the nucleus of the throng, and had drawn it together. Finally, in the rear of the procession—for it was a mobile crowd, and in penny-a-lining diction might have been called a cortège—there followed leisurely three well-dressed men, who had breakfasted together that morning, and, taking a walk afterwards for recreation, had fallen in with something of the nature of a spectacle, or show, and were determined to follow it to the end.

That end was now near. It was the door of the Edifice. Philibert drew up the window, and could look right down upon the Something that was being borne along in the midst of the gazers and the schoolboy critics. Four men of the water-side order—an order which differs very slightly from one end of the world to the other—were carrying, by means of straps yoked over their brawny shoulders, a kind of stretcher or bier. On it, lay Something about six feet long. It was entirely covered with some coarse sacking, from which, as it swayed along, water dripped pretty freely on the sunny June pavement. A moment's glance at this Something beneath the sacking was sufficient to tell you that what lay there had been human, and was dead.

"A lodger at last," quoth the guardian, quietly. "I must go down and see to his toilette. Will you be one of us, mon gros? Amanda, my angel, thou wilt amuse Ma'melle Lily until I return."

Madame Thomas would have dearly liked to join the party bound for the basement, but lacking an invitation, was forced to content herself with assisting in the consolation of Lily.

The task was not a very difficult one. The girl soon forgot the ugly object whose real import she had by intuition guessed. Then Amanda played and sang to her again; and, what with the warbling of the birds and the lively prattle of her companions, she soon grew comparatively cheerful.

Not so cheerful, perhaps, as those below who were making the lodger's toilette, and whistling over their task.

It was a paradoxical toilette, for, in order to

dress him, they undressed him, and left him stark. Although he had had lately a great deal more water than was good for him—the excess of fluid had indeed been a proximate cause of his decease—they had no sooner gotten him on to his bed of rest, than they set more water to trickle over him. It is true that to keep him sweet, they mingled some chloride of lime with the water. He had need to be kept sweet, this lodger, for he was drowned as well as dead.

The crowd, who had been excluded from the Edifice for half an hour after the admission of the lodger with his bearers, and who had grown as impatient as any other crowd—say that waiting for admission to the pit of a theatre—would under similar circumstances: the crowd had at last ingress allowed it. The sight-seers poured in and saw the show. They came straggling out by twos and threes soon afterwards. Their criticisms on the spectacle were various. The cook said that he must have been a fine-looking man—bel homme; the schoolboys were of course delighted. One of the soldiers when he came out was sick. He said that it was the cigar which made him feel unwell. The audience were in the main agreed that the dead man had not been in the Seine many hours; that he had been legitimately drowned and not murdered—notwithstanding an ugly gash on his right shoulder: which the connoisseurs averred had been done with the boat-hook with which he had been fished up; and that he was a foreigner.

Of the three well-dressed men who had followed the crowd at their leisure, only one had at first entered the Edifice. It was Jean Baptiste Constant.

Rataplan had flatly refused to go in. He had no taste for such horrors, he said.

Franz Stimm promised to enter, on receiving a report from Constant as to the appearance of the dead. "I likes a ansom corps," said the courier. "It is schrecklich schön, muy graziose; but ven he is vets and wounds, and zmells bad, he makes mine stomjacks veel queer."

So J. B. Constant went in alone.

He rushed out a minute afterwards with a livid face.

"Come in, both of you!" he cried. "As I live, I have found him—my old master—the child's father—Mr. Blunt!"

Francis Blunt, Esquire, stiff and stark, his soaked and shabby clothes hanging on a peg behind him, lay, indeed, on a cold slab in the MORGUE of Paris.

So there is death in life, and life in death; and the daughter was alive above, while the father was dead below; and both should reckon nothing of their meeting or their parting, till all meet to part no more.

#### CHAPTER XXXIX. LILY RUNS AWAY.

THERE was no other way out of it. She loved, wholly and to desperation, and her love was hopeless. She felt that she must either die or go. She was too young, too pure to think of killing herself. Of hard and bitter trials the

poor child had surely had enough in her short and troublous career, and over and over again she had fancied that she was weary of life, and would be glad to be quit of it, for good and all, and at rest. But there is a thing called hope, the which, although we pretend or imagine ourselves to be sunk in irremediable despair, is still latent in the human breast. Although the bed of the stream may be dry in the parched and arid season, the mountain springs are never choked, and in time the old channel will be flooded, and the river will rise and reach the ocean. Although she suffered and wept very sorely, within her was still that elasticity and rebounding power which, under heaven, might give her strength to endure anguish more terrible than any she had yet felt. Hope is never dead until the mind is utterly unable to suggest an alternative. Then you go mad and slay yourself.

Her passion, it became sadly evident, was known to, or at least vehemently suspected, by Madame de Kergolay. By degrees the affectionate kindness with which the good old lady was wont to treat her protégée dwindled down to a cold and ceremonious tolerance of her presence. She was addressed as "Mademoiselle," and as "you," instead of "little darling," "little angel," a hundred other terms of endearment, and "thou." If she were absent for an hour no inquiries were made as to where she had been. Soon she was allowed to remain in her chamber for half a day together, unmasked and unnoticed. Complete and contemptuous indifference on the part of her patroness seemed to set in. She was asked to perform no little tasks, to move no cushions, to give her opinion on no needlework. Her own growing proficiency in the accomplishments which had been taught her elicited no admiration from her for whose praise Lily fondly looked, and, until lately, had looked alone.

One day—it was the first for a very long time—the old lady sent for her, and in acid and querulous tones gave her that which women, among themselves, call "a good talking to," that which was half a reprimand and half an attempt to extort a confession. Madame de Kergolay made no direct accusation against Lily, but her doubts, her inuendoes, her denunciations of an implied ingratititude, heartlessness, and hypocrisy, were a hundred times more painful to the girl than if she had brought a specific indictment against her, and charged her with the commission of deliberate crime. She told her how mortifying it was for the aged to find their efforts on behalf of the young required by treachery and deceit. She delivered cutting aphorisms on the ease with which young persons thought they could delude and hoodwink their elders; she delivered sardonic apophthegms as to certain vipers which had been warmed in compassionate bosoms, and how much sharper than a serpent's tooth it was to have a thankless child, even when it happened that the child in question was an adopted one. And a good deal more did she expatiate on the

reverence and loyalty that were due from inferiors towards those who, although they might have been deprived by Providence in its wisdom of their worldly possessions, were still immeasurably and irrevocably above them.

A dozen times during this harangue was Lily on the point of casting herself at the old lady's feet, of clinging to her dress, of embracing her, of avowing her love, of admitting that it was rash, mad, wicked, unreciprocated, of adjuring her by the memory of all the loving kindness she had hitherto experienced, to forgive her and to bless her, and to permit her to retire from her presence and her house, to pray for her benefactress, no longer petted and fondled by her, but still unreproved and undiscarded. This was not to be. So soon as words of admission began to quiver on Lily's lips, the old lady would tell her, with freezing dignity, that she had no wish to pry into her secrets, that she doubtless knew her own affairs best, that she must be the best judge under the circumstances as to what was due to society, to those who had befriended her, and to herself; that she would not presume to offer any counsel so high and mighty a personage as Mademoiselle, whom she had then the honour to address: and that, after all, she must know a great deal more about the world and its ways than those who were three, if not four times her age. "You belong to a rising and precocious generation, Mademoiselle," the ancient dame concluded, with bitter and condescending irony; "to a generation which has made up its mind to outrage and to insult all that persons of maturer age deem worthy of preservation and respect: to a generation which has cast such bagatelles as truth, gratitude, honesty, and maidenly modesty to the four winds of heaven. Allez! I am not deceived. I am only a little disappointed. I have only lost another of the few and most fondly cherished illusions which remained between me and my grave."

Lily saw that in her present temper it was useless to argue with one who, rightly or wrongly, had evidently a preconceived prejudice against her, and that one of the strongest nature. In very humble and submissive accents she asked, as she was Quite Alone and friendless, what were madame's intentions towards her as regarded the future. "I don't know much," added Lily, plaintively; "but if madame thinks me strong enough, I am ready to go out as a governess." Herein Lily indulged in a vague reminiscence of the Pension Marcassin, and of the mission to which, according to Miss Marygold, all young girls who had the misfortune to be educated and poor were doomed.

"Ma foi," responded Madame de Kergolay, shrugging her shoulders, half in indifference and half in embarrassment, "I scarcely know. I suppose I must speak to cet abbé malencontreux, that inopportune ecclesiastic who brought you here. Yes; I must speak to him; et puis on verra. As for assuming the functions of a governess at your immature age—ne vous en déplaise pas le mot—and with the crude and im-

perfect, if not vicious, education you have already acquired, the idea strikes me as being utterly preposterous and absurd. Nor, although I do not doubt your great quickness and aptitude for learning anything to which you choose to apply your mind, do I think you at all qualified, with your previous irregular training, to instil sentiments of piety and morality into the young."

Everything and everybody was seemingly against our unhappy Lily. "What, then, do you wish me to do, madame?" she continued, in a subdued tone.

"I repeat, we shall see. Something may turn up. Were you of a different creed, or were your mind differently constituted, it might be expedient for a young and destitute person for whom generous individuals were willing to make a small dotation, to take the vows and seek the retirement of a convent; the dames of St. Vincent de Paul would be happy to receive any novice of my recommendation for a sum of three thousand francs once paid. But, to speak frankly, I should hesitate to consign to a cloister a young lady possessing so very sprightly a disposition."

"I can sew, I can be a servant," urged poor Lily, dolorously.

"Et faire la cuisine par-dessus le marché, et faire danser l'anse du panier," Madame de Kergolay, with grim sarcasm, went on. "O, I have very little doubt of the variety of your talents, even for domestic service. You would make an admirable soubrette in one of M. de Marivaux's comedies—one of those astute chambermaids who are the life and soul of an intrigue, and are not indisposed occasionally to a little flirtation with M. le Marquis."

Poor Lily began to sob as though her heart would break. She felt, in all intensity, the contempt and dislike expressed in these words. She felt that she was being treated with cruelty and injustice, but she had not the courage indignantly to justify herself.

Madame de Kergolay seemed more wearied than touched by the girl's grief. "There," she said, waving her hand as Lily's sobs grew more passionate, "we can dispense with these miaulings. M. de Buffon has told us all about crocodiles and their tears. I am too nervous, and too much of an invalid, to be able to support any scenes. I shall be obliged to you to give me no theatrical tirades, and to leave the room."

Burying her face in her handkerchief, and endeavouring, but in vain, to suppress her sobs, Lily obeyed the command, and turned to go.

"You will not, if you please, approach me again," continued the inexorable old lady, "until you are sent for. Your presence, in sight of recent events, is productive of anything but pleasurable sensations. M. l'Abbé and I will confer as to your future, and in due time you will be made acquainted with our decision. Your meals will be served to you in your own chamber. Justice and consideration—much more than you have been willing to extend to others—will be dealt out to you. Affection and

indulgence you can no longer expect. Go, misguided child."

Lily's trembling hand was on the lock of the door, her foot was on the threshold to depart, when she heard once more the old lady's voice.

"One moment. Let me give you a word of counsel. Any little arrangements you may have made for carrying on a most culpable intrigue have been frustrated. M. Edgar Greyfaunt has left for England."

It was the first time, in all her reproachful speeches, that she had mentioned her grand-nephew's name. It was the first time that she had directly made allusion to any connexion between Edgar and the cause of her anger. The hint was quite enough for Lily.

She went forth from the presence of the kind heart which had melted for her, a poor, destitute, friendless stranger, and which now seemed turned to marble. What had she done? Ah! her heart told her too well, and with damning precision. She had dared to love. She had presumed to look up from her lowly station to the patrician kinsman of her benefactress. The eagle may look at the sun, but not the worm. Her upturned gaze had been met by a withering frown. She had been stricken down and trampled under foot. It was all over now. She was discovered, detected, degraded. Madame de Kergolay regarded her as a monster of ingratitude. The abbé would but reflect his patroness's opinion. The very servants would look askance upon her as one proscribed and in disgrace. And Edgar? Edgar, ah misery! was gone.

There was nothing left for her but to go too. Whither she knew not. She had but a few francs in her pocket; she dared not take with her any considerable portion of her wardrobe; besides, it was supplied to her by Madame de Kergolay, and was not hers to take. She had no friends; none, at least, to whom she would dare to appeal in her extremity. Amanda at the Morgue was barely an acquaintance. She dared not go to that dreadful place again. There was, it was true, the Pension Marcassin. Should she go there, confront the ogress in black velvet who had made her girlhood miserable, and entreat her, even on her knees, to take her back again, were it even as a common drudge to sweep and scrub the class-rooms out? But how would the ogress receive her? Would she not spurn her, or at best dismiss her with derision? And then, was not the abbé in constant communication with the Marcassin, and would not her retreat be known? She wanted to go away somewhere and hide her head. She wanted to be heard of no more by those who once loved her, but now looked upon her with aversion and disdain. She wanted to be Quite Alone.

If she could only find the Marygold! But where was she to seek for her, and what assistance could she expect from her even if she found her? No, she would go to England, she thought. It would not cost much to reach England. She would ask where Stockwell was, and endeavour to find out the Bunycastles. She would seek for Cutwig and Co.; nay, with a

kind of blush she thought that she might meet the tall gentleman who had met her at the Greenwich dinner when she was a child, and had been kind to her.

But what if she should fall into the hands of the strange and imperious lady who had brought her from beyond the sea! Well, she had borne that before, and might bear it again. It could scarcely be worse than the misery she was now enduring.

To England, then. But how? She was as ignorant of the means by which the desired land was to be reached as any child of five years old could be, nor did she venture to ask any one around her for information. She knew nothing of the formalities requisite to procure a passport even for inland travelling, or how she was to reach the coast, or get on board ship. She would ask, she thought, when she had taken to flight, and was beyond pursuit. Pursuit! Would any one deem it worth his while to pursue so forlorn and deserted a little maiden as she was? At all events, she would seek her way, and, if necessary, beg it. Perhaps it would end in her dying of hunger and cold like the Children in the Wood; and where were the Robin Redbreasts who would cover her with leaves?

Nineteen francs and seventeen centimes: that was the sum total of her resources: the residue of Madame de Kergolay's last gift of pocket-money. How sorry she was, now, that she had bought those little lawn cuffs and kerchief at "Le Chat qui pelote" in the Rue St. Denis. But she was happy then, and had not been scolded—ah! so cruelly—and did not dream of running away. Was her contemplated flight wrong? Ay, surely it was; both wicked and self-willed, and hard-hearted, and ungrateful. But what was she to do? Who was to advise, to censure, to dissuade her? She had no friends, and she was Quite Alone.

Stay! She had a golden locket which Madame de Kergolay had given her. It was encircled, too, with small diamonds, and contained a lock of hair of the Martyr King—of Louis the Sixteenth. She would be obliged to sell that if her money were insufficient to take her to England. There were plenty of shops on the quays, where they advertised in the windows to buy old gold, and silver, and diamonds, in any quantity and at good prices. Was it not base, mean, almost felonious, to sell the pretty trinket which she whom Lily loved best in the world had given her? Truly her conscience told her it was. But she had no hope, no means, save in the disposal of that locket. Perhaps the dealer would be merciful enough to keep it for her till she could earn enough money to buy it back again, and then she would return it to Madame de Kergolay. She tormented herself with all kinds of blundering sophistry, and, had she been a professed logician, she could not have arrived at last at more erroneous conclusions. At all events, the locket had been given to her. Was it not her own? She tried to persuade herself that it was. To a certain extent, it might have been; but never, surely, to use as a basis for

running away. Well, God forgive her her naughtiness, she thought desperately. But she must sell the locket.

And why to England, since she knew that Edgar Greyfaunt had gone thither? Should not prudence, pride, that "maidenly modesty," her want of which the cruel Madame de Kergolay had taunted her with, deter her from following to a strange land the man she loved, but who could not care five centimes for her? Again sophistry came to her aid. She was not following him. England was a very large place. There was surely room enough there for two. Besides, had she not a right in England? Was she not of English birth? Had she not passed portion of her childhood there? Might she not find friends in England? Friends! A fresh burst of sobs broke from her, as she remembered how utterly friendless and alone she was.

All this and much more she thought of on her way to the little bedroom where she had once been so happy. She had scarcely the heart to enter it again, or to open the casement and look out upon the housetop, and see the blue smoke wreathing upwards, and listen to the jangling piano, and the voice of Jules quarrelling with Seraphine his wife. She had nothing more to do with Paris. Its sights and sounds were to be henceforth estranged from her. For an hour or more she sat on the stairs outside her door, her face in her hands, her tears mingling with her thoughts, her sense of thorough loneliness and misery with both. And then she went into her chamber, and cast herself on the bed, and lay there thinking and sobbing till it was dark.

They brought her up some dinner in due season; but the ancient servitor, acting probably under instructions, only knocked at the door, and telling her in a harsh voice that her repast was served, left it there on a tray, and retired. He came up again in an hour's time, found that the viands had not been touched, and took the tray away again without a word.

"Let her starve herself if she chooses," the unbending old lady down stairs said, when the ancient servant, whose heart was bleeding, somehow, for Lily, represented these facts to his mistress. "It is a voluntary act on her part. She is not locked in. The food was placed at her door, and she was duly informed of its being there."

"But suppose mademoiselle becomes ill—falls into a languor—into syncope, in a word—madame would be very sorry."

"Madame would be nothing whatever of the kind," the old lady retorted, sharply. "Hold your tongue. You presume upon my indulgence, and the privilege of long service. Are you, too, about to turn on me—ungrateful?"

"Heaven forbid, madame."

"It would seem like it. As for her starving herself, or falling ill, there is no danger of that. I tell you, that it is only her temper. Mere sulkiness and obstinacy. This is the way with girls of the present generation. When I was at

the convent, if I had behaved so, the good sisters would have given me the discipline. There, let me hear no more of this ungrateful and designing serpent. She will be hungry enough to-morrow morning, I will warrant."

What dreadful crime had Lily committed that she could turn to such rancorous severity a nature which she had hitherto found soft, and yielding, and tender? Alas, her sin was unpardonable: it was the sin against pride and haughtiness. Madame de Kergolay could have excused her almost everything; but she could not forgive her for being human.

Lily scarcely slept a wink that night—the last she was resolved to pass in the place which had been a home, and a happy home to her. She did not undress, but lay on the bed, tossing and tumbling restlessly. She rose, so soon as it was daylight, almost in a fever. She was full of pulses. Her blood beat the drum in her temples, her eyes, her ears, her wrists, her very gums, and the root of her hot tongue. She drank a long draught of cold water, which only seemed to render her more thirsty, and laved her hands and face in the fluid which still failed to cool her. Looking at herself in the glass she was terrified to see how swollen and inflamed her eyes looked, how sunken were her cheeks, with a hectic spot on each bone. She wanted rest, consolation, nourishment, or bleeding, it might be; but she could stay for none of these. A hundred clanging voices kept shouting out to her that there was no other way but this, and that she must run away.

The wretched little woman had made up her mind to fly. With her childhood, her girlhood, she seemed to have done for ever. She was a grown-up Pariah and outcast now—an adult vagabond and wanderer upon the face of the earth. God help her; but there was no one else to render a hand of succour to her. She was afraid to put up any linen, any change of dress, or even so much as an additional shawl. She went forth in her usual walking-dress and simple bonnet, and nought else, save her beauty and her innocence—for though she was constrained to sell that locket she *was* innocent—to cover her.

But before she went away she knelt down, and prayed Heaven earnestly and tearfully to bless the woman—her and her household—who had had mercy upon her, a solitary and helpless wayfarer. She prayed for the good clergyman who had brought her hither, at once the cause of her great happiness and her greater sorrow. And, finally, she prayed to be forgiven the deed she was about to do.

Then she rose up, and hastily thrust beneath the wings of her bonnet the masses of soft brown hair she had been wont to arrange each morning with such dainty neatness. Then, sitting down at the little table where, with joy and contentment, she had been used to study, she penned a few hasty lines to Madame de Kergolay. She said that she would return no more, and that it was useless to seek for her; that she was not so wicked as to meditate suicide, and that she

trusted in God to watch over and protect her. She confessed that she had been foolish, that she had been ungrateful, that she had been mad, in daring to love a certain person, but with passionate disclaimers she denied having been treacherous or hypocritical. And, finally, she implored Madame de Kergolay to forgive her, and to think of her not as she was, but as she had been.

It was a glorious summer morning, and the sun was literally pouring into the room, drenching every object with gold. Lily thought of that sunny morning she had sat on the carpet at Rhododendron House, and said "I won't," to Miss Barbara Bunnycastle. Ah! how long ago that was. She was quite a little child then, though so unhappy. And now she was a woman, and unhappier than ever.

Brighter shone the sun, promising a glorious day. It was the twenty-seventh of July.

#### THE POOR MAN HIS OWN MASTER.

THE course of the poor-law of late years, judging by its circular letters and alterations, has been, on the whole, in favour of those who receive relief; so let us hope that in good time reform may be carried out, which, while retaining everything serviceable, would rid the system of some faults. One fault is assuredly its action as an obstacle to the development of life assurance societies suited to the requirements of the farm labourer.

The principle that a person must be destitute before eligible for relief—although distress is comparative and often is most trying among thousands who are not destitute—is harsh and repugnant to the present social condition of the peasantry. The case was very different upwards of thirty years ago, when the poor-rate, though administered on a good principle, had been so flagrantly abused that it had become little better than supplementary to wages. One sees, however, a return to it with good results in the relief at present given in the cotton districts; and the efficient services of relieving-officers of districts give opportunity for gentler and more considerate treatment of the poor. In former days food was dear, and the farm labourer sullen discontented and mischievous, so that neither stack-yard nor machinery, then slowly establishing itself on the farm, was safe. The poor-law has not produced the great change we see, but is in its way a part of it. We have no wish to underrate the advantages of a system (though we have mortal quarrels with its administration sometimes) which scoured the country of many abuses, saved the ratepayers a great deal of money, and at the same time enabled the hungry, naked, and houseless to keep body and soul together, and sleep with a roof over them; though all was done with official austerity, and under conditions which made paupers and criminals wonderfully like each other, with a large balance to the credit of the jail-bird, in the matter of food, lodging, and dress. But times are again changed, and

the system which has done its work needs a change also. Machinery has altered the direction, not the need, of labour, and the peasantry are now proud of the implements which their fathers leagued together to destroy. The farm labourer is no longer morose and disaffected, but is proud to possess claims to a better social position than he hitherto has held. And if his class does not take its due position so soon as it ought, the difficulties which stand in the way demand careful consideration, with a view to their removal.

What is there in the nature of the farm labourer to make him an exception among men of other industrial classes? He, too, desires to better his condition, and has his ability for honest work. He loves his wife and children, and desires to see them safe from worldly harm. What is there in his occupation to make it impossible that he should become an independent in his sphere as the intelligent artisan or tradesman, who labours year after year till he grows old, retires from business, and supports his last days on the interest of the money which is to go to his wife and family when the time of his departure comes?

There is nothing either in the nature of the man or in his occupation to make his way an exception to the common way of men. But there are obstacles for which he is not responsible, by which he is discouraged from setting about his proper social work. Allow him the same stimulus which others feel, and we shall have him also, when prudent, turning all his opportunities to right account. Permit him to save something of his weekly earnings without adding to his struggle the mischievous condition that if ever pinched by poverty or sickness, his pound or two in the next post-office savings-bank will be in jeopardy ere he can touch the rate. Let him feel sure that the sickness and superannuation pay of country clubs are not a contrivance of the ratepayers for saving the rates; but at the same time add, as the necessary safeguard against poor-rate plunder, that he shall pay his fair proportion as a ratepayer himself, and thus be himself interested in seeing that the idle and dissolute poor no longer throw themselves at pleasure upon the union relief. Concede to him, if you will, the privilege which the ratepayers enjoy, as only Englishmen can, of a grievance in vestry or a poll for the parish officers. These qualifications will soon set the farm labourer in a different and, we think, a much better position. He will give up his notion that the poor-rate is in the nature of his rent-charge in lieu of part ownership in the clods of the valley among which he scatters or cuts the grain, his claim to which he must on no account imperil by self-help.

It is stated on authority that provident societies diminish the amount of the poor-rate annually to the extent of a couple of millions. In other words, about twenty-five per cent of the amount required to relieve distress is secured by the system of sick and burial clubs. In England, "one person in nine is a member

of a benefit society of some kind or other; in France, one in seventy-six."

In a tranquil country, in which food is cheap, the labour market is improving, and the industrious people are contented, the system of provident societies will force its way against all obstacles. Adverse legislation may impede its growth, but the societies spread themselves over the whole country, although they have taken, in the case of the beer-house clubs, a mishapen and sickly form.

There are upwards of twenty thousand societies certified by Mr. Tidd Pratt, the registrar. The advantages secured by their certificates are principally that they are entitled to the benefit of the act relating to friendly societies, they can appoint responsible trustees, they can sue and be sued, and have the advantage of the experience and advice of the registrar, whose assistance is in great request, judging from the number of letters with which his last report is crammed. He can punish fraudulent officers in such societies; but it is no part of his duty, nor does it belong to the profession of which the registrar of friendly societies must be a member, to value liabilities and assets. The valuation of an insurance society is actuary's work. We may observe, then, in passing, how usefully direct legislation might help friendly societies if actuaries were joined to the registrar's staff. And, if the certificate were withheld in every society declared by the valuer insolvent beyond hope, much trouble and waste effort would be saved. The valuer would quickly disclose results of a kind not altogether looked for in certified societies whose tables have received the approval that the law requires.

But the certified societies are a small force compared with the "Brummagem" or "sharing-out clubs," which are under the sole sway of publicans. By their means a thriving trade is maintained for the beer-house. These cannot be judged by any common and ordinary rules hitherto applied. They must be taken, as intelligent farm labourers know very well, in relation to, and dependent upon, poor-rate relief.

The family likeness of these non-certified societies is tolerably uniform.

Large societies, such as the Manchester Unity, have "lodges" or "courts," as their branches are termed, in different parts of the country. Of these branches many are unsound, but they are, generally speaking, in a better state than the beer-house club, although in some respects resembling it closely. They have the advantage of advice and assistance from the chief officers of their central body. It is impossible to speak without praise, of the manner in which the duties of such persons are discharged. By their means an insolvent lodge obtains a skilled opinion of its position, fairly and impartially stated; the members are encouraged to look their difficulties in the face, and are, if they be retrievable, shown how to take measures to secure their position. The instances in which this advice has saved members from disaster are almost beyond number.

Of a Brummagem club this is the typical form. "The United Order" is a society which secures to the members provision during sickness at ten shillings a week full pay for three months, and in event of continued illness half-pay for a similar term; after which the sick member is "superannuated" on half-a-crown a week, payable so long as the club lasts. In case of death, the sum payable is six pounds. For all these benefits the farm-labourer pays sixpence a week, and an annual fee of one shilling. On the death of his wife, the members are bound to raise by a levy—the rate of which depends on the number in the society—the sum of four pounds. If he lose a child, there is a levy of two pounds.

All the members of the United Order pay alike. They avoid the difficulty, which is no small one to them, of different premiums graduated to different ages, by striking out, in a rough and ready manner, an average uniform rate of payment. This plan cannot produce insolvency so long as the average payment of all the members compared with their average age is high enough. If the average payment be too low for the average age, insolvency, for this reason alone, would follow. If it be too high, every penny of the surplus goes to secure solvency.

Neither does the injustice of the uniform payment seem so great in practice as it is in theory. Where all members enter, say, between the ages of twenty and thirty, the variation is but small in a graduated contribution, and if a simple plan be thus secured instead of a complex one, which even men who are not muddled by beer and tobacco have to think over before acting upon, the farm labourer gets cheaply to the end of his problem. As for the injustice done in electing two or three members, who, though twice the age of others, pay the same uniform rate, it is compensated, in the opinion of the United Order, by the graver services and better advice to be had from such men. To them, as a general rule, the young men leave the management—to them and to the landlord of the house at which they meet; until, the young men having come to know more than the old men, there is a disturbance, and the club is reformed with a fresh ministry to help the sovereign landlord.

Members of the United Order are admitted at the annual meeting on the first Monday in May. A verbal declaration is made by the proposer that to the best of his knowledge and belief the candidate is subject to no disease or disorder likely to throw him upon the funds. In a country town or village it is next to impossible to make such a declaration falsely, and escape immediate detection; but, should there be fraud in this matter, the member is cast out, and forfeits all that he has paid. Often, even in public-house clubs, a medical certificate, for which the usual payment is a shilling, is required instead of a verbal declaration. The landlord and two of the older and most respected men are joint treasurers. They have a box with three unlike locks, of one of which each man carries the key. It can therefore be open only when the

treasurers meet. Money beyond a sum in hand necessary for outgoings is placed in their joint names in the nearest savings-bank, and the attention of savings-bank managers ought to be given to see that the non-certified societies can legally open an account with them. The United Order has, however, voted the investment of a large sum in a builder's speculation, with results we will not venture to anticipate. It holds a fortnightly "court," as it is termed, in the taproom of the Black Bear, at eight o'clock on Saturday night, on which occasions the "regalia" of the order are displayed, the strong-box is placed on the table and examined, and a verbal statement of accounts is rendered. Fines are then levied, and, by rule, "spent in beer." Every member is bound to attend, or be fined threepence for absence. One fine is, "If any member swears or utters a profane word during the time the court is open, he shall be fined sixpence for each offence. The money to be spent in the room." The check to one sort of excess is made the inducement to another.

Taking all payments into account, fines and necessary outlay for beer, the weekly rate, the occasional levy, the annual entrance fee, it is doubtful whether thirty-three shillings in any year clears the farm labourer of all claims from the club; thirty-five would be nearer the mark. For, besides the sixpence a week, and the annual shilling, his expenses are at least threepence for "the good of the house," if not in fine for absence at each fortnightly court. The chance of a "levy" is not taken into account, as its incidence is uncertain, and moreover it is looked upon in the light of that most common good, charitable help of the poor to one another in affliction and bereavement, and shall not, therefore, enter into our calculation. Neither in this estimate of cost is any sum (beyond the entrance fee) reckoned for the expenses of the annual festival, against which we should be sorry to say a word. The character of the few holidays enjoyed by the rural poor will rise as the poor themselves rise, socially and morally: not by discouraging their little opportunities of festive intercourse. The club dinner is to many a poor man his one yearly dinner party, more kindly and sociable than many a feast in Belgravia, and God bless it!

The annual meeting is held by rule at the Black Bear, at ten o'clock A.M. on the first Monday in May. A statement of accounts is then made, and of all receipts and disbursements of the club, excepting fines, which it will be remembered are summarily disposed of. "Sharing out" is then made; it is a bonus of a few shillings per member, and the investing labourer hears the amount with pleasure, as he means to forfeit the day's wages on the farm, and spend the whole day jovially. There will be dinner at one, for half-past one. His wife and family are to come afterwards, and usually the bonus will almost pay all.

At this moment, however, the club is in its pangs of annual dissolution, a process which usually occupies a few minutes, until some

member proposes the existence of the Order for another year; and that the members do consist of —

Mark the advantage of the contrivance. “A heavy case” has burdened the sick fund during past years. It is one of the older men. There is no doubt that although he is now well enough to attend the festival, he will soon have another attack. Take his payments into club during past years in a lump sum, and five-and-twenty pounds would not cover them, independently of interest. But he has had nearly ten pounds for sickness; so his name is left out of the renovated club list, and the election is made this time without him. The old man is kindly treated, every one thinks, for he receives bonus like the rest, and a dinner ticket gratis. He will accommodate himself to his position with the resignation common to men used to bear the stroke of adversity. He will not spoil the pleasures of the day by so much as a murmur.

Another member struck out is a man who has been always a troublesome customer. He would be sure to be on the sick fund as long as the rules allowed, and is now on superannuation allowance. He had a narrow escape last year, but now they tell him he may have his bonus and dinner ticket for nothing, and may go and demand the half-crown a week from poor-rate, or go into the union. “Out-door relief,” he consoles himself by remarking, “is a better thing than half-a-crown from the Order,” which is subject to the weekly deduction of that six-pence, which is by rule payable in sickness and in health. The liability for burial money of six pounds is dismissed with a joke. Three or four lads of twenty are admitted, and by this time it is near the hour for Divine Service. There is a crowd outside and in the house. The band is thumping its big drum, and rending the air with its screams of agony in polka measure. The flags of the order are unfurled. The treasurers carry their wands, and wear their decorations. The farm labourer who is a member of this club, appears with his brother members in a blue and white cotton band over one shoulder, tied in a bunch of red ribbon under the other; and the procession starts for church. In church, the regalia, as the trumpery is designated, is placed in a conspicuous position; it was once put upon the communion-table. Morning Prayer is read by the curate, followed by a sermon from the rector, who always receives, and generally accepts, the invitation to dinner.

Far be it from our purpose to write one word tending to lessen any good influence among the rural poor. The sermon will have been on the duty of bearing one another’s burdens, of the strong helping the weak, or charity and brotherly kindness will have been enforced, and so far well; but we must not forget that the clergyman’s assistance upon such occasions is, in the eyes of the members of the club, a visible sign that their scheme has the approval of the Church.

When larger friendly societies were established in different counties, it was necessary to con-

sider them to some extent as charitable institutions. Subscriptions were obtained for the work, and the co-operation of benevolent men was secured. Patrons and vice-patrons were found in the leading men of the county, who became honorary members, and, with the aid of the clergy and others, sound societies were fairly managed. The uppermost notion in men’s minds, however, was that the work was a charity. There was the same delusion about savings-banks. The impression is fast waning in reference to the banks; but it still continues to array the friendly society in false attire. The friendly society is as much a matter of £ s. d. at interest, as are the deposits in the post-office savings-banks. In the year eighteen ‘twenty-eight, a society, now called the County of Kent Friendly Society, was formed at Sittingbourne, in Kent, through the exertions of a clergyman, since identified with the question of life assurance among the clergy. Its capital is considerably above twenty thousand pounds, and its liabilities are several thousands less. In its earlier career the Kent Friendly Society elected a great number of farm labourers. Their employers looked upon the society as a charity, and paid for a time the monthly contributions of their men. The men, in their turn, considered it to be a charity, and that of a somewhat insidious kind; and when their employers ceased to pay the premiums, many of the assured forsook it. This ignorant proceeding was advantageous to the society, for the money they left behind them when they ceased to be members, and returned to their various “United Orders,” was, to some extent, the foundation of its wealth.

A glance at its tables will show that had a farm labourer joined such a society instead of the one above described, when he was, say twenty-five years of age, he might have secured the following benefits—sickness and burial money, ten shillings a week and eight pounds at death, for the sum of twenty shillings yearly; and for another eight shillings a year he would have secured four shillings a week superannuation allowance, to commence at the age of seventy, when sickness pay ceases. The full pay in case of sickness would have been given, not for three months, but for a whole year, had he required it during the first five years’ membership, and for a hundred and four weeks at a later time. The directors would, after the second year, have power to reduce him to half-pay.

This provision may be compared with that of the three months’ sick pay from the United Order, and with the cost of that precarious shelter which does not in the long run secure anything but pauper’s allowance and a final refuge in the union. In other words, the farm labourer thus investing would have been clear of the weekly half-crown of poor-rate relief. He would have continued in his cottage among his family, able—like many hale old men on the wrong side of seventy—still to earn a few shillings from time to time in light labour, which would be a pleasant occupation to him.

What, then, is the actual case of farm la-

bourers in relation to such societies? Do they flock into them, and avail themselves of the plan by means of which every healthy able-bodied labourer might secure independence, and obtain a comfortable provision such as never falls to the lot of a pauper? They do not flock in. As a rule, the farm labourers of Kent, for example, will not join the society. They prefer the "Brummagem clubs," of which there are hundreds in the county, and unnumbered thousands in the country. They leave to an inconsiderable minority of their numbers, the honourable effort of achieving independence by self-help.

It is a fact that, although the machinery of the County of Kent Friendly Society would place the bulk of the farm labourers above the degradation of pauperism at a much less price than they pay to maintain the sharing-out clubs, the mass of the agricultural labourers refuse such means of rescue. Why so? The answer to that question cannot be truly given without reference to the practical working of the poor-law.

Poverty does not prevent our peasantry from venturing upon the struggle, for the labourer pays more, as we have shown, for bad help than for good. It is not the wish to manage their clubs in their own way, as persons conversant with the question can testify. It is not the desire to conceal from the charitably disposed the amount paid by the club in sickness, though this weighs with some of the unscrupulous; and most assuredly it is not that they are careless or insensible to the blessings of independence. It is the fear that, if they break down for a time at any point in the long struggle, before they have secured their independence, their little treasure, laid by in the course of years of hard and honest toil, must go, before they can have help out of the poor-rate.

Pauperism and the beer-house friendly society are thus joined together in delusive compact. But once let the rules of the friendly society be remodelled, its management become trustworthy, its members divested of the opinion that pauperism is never to be considered part of the provision for them as a class, and there will be little danger to the club or to the club-house.

As to meetings of such societies being held in the beer-house, we shall not raise objection. The remedy for occasional excesses and abuses is to be found, not in interfering with the liberty of the citizen, but in his moral and social improvement. Apart from religious influences, there is nothing more conducive to such improvement than the labour to win independence by one's own exertions.

How has the immoral persuasion taken possession of our farm labourers that the poor-rate is "their rent-charge in lieu of the soil which they cultivate for others?" That it is for the distressed members of the community, and is their portion in lieu of the rood of land which, under some semi-barbarous conditions, men might live on if they could, is not disputed. But how does it mean that farm labourers should, by help of poor-law provision, be able to marry many years earlier than middle-class

ratepayers can afford to marry; that they should frame their expenditure on such a scale as to leave nothing but their club when the evil day arrives; that the club should be so contrived, as by its annual dissolution and renewal, to throw cases upon the poor-rate?

The friendly society is taken into account by the guardians of the poor in every application for relief. In certain unions—it is feared they form but a small per-cent of the unions in this country—its members are not refused help, but a portion of the relief which would be assigned without deduction to applicants who, through improvidence, belonged to no club, is allotted to them.

A return showing the number of unions which adopt this partial concession on behalf of the benefit club would be valuable and easily obtained by the authorities. It is, however, to be feared that, in the great majority, the harsh and strict interpretation of the principle of destitution before relief, is insisted upon, so that the sick member of a friendly society would be denied all aid. But whether this be the case or not, the fact remains that a heavy discouragement is thus placed by the administrators of the poor-law in the way of the friendly society.

By the act known as the Small Tenements Act, the incidence of the rate was removed from cottagers; and the owner instead of the occupier, in all parishes where it was so agreed, was henceforth to bear the burden. It was, said the preamble, "expensive, difficult, and frequently impracticable" to collect the rate. The term "frequently impracticable" was held to be better than saying "frequently impossible," although the distinction was somewhat puzzling. But admitting the force of the reasons found in the "expense and difficulty, and the frequent impracticability," they belong to a time when there was not that prosperity in the country which has since raised the wages of farm labourers very considerably. Till this act is repealed, we may search in vain for the remedy to the mischievous view taken by the poor, which guides them in their choice or formation of a benefit society.

For it is matter of experience that the payment of the poor-rate would introduce an effectual check on the reckless and shameless system by which claims are commonly made, notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of the relieving officer, and the supervision of the guardians. Unscrupulous claimants who are encouraged to get as much as they can would be denounced without reserve by those whose opinion they would regard, and the duties of a deserving and much abused class of men, relieving-officers, would be lightened of much that is discreditable to applicants for relief, and harassing and annoying to themselves.

This new class of ratepayers would have restored to them the parish franchise, of which the above-named measure deprived them, and such a privilege would help to secure prompt settlement of the rate-dues. In nominating or voting for the guardians, the farm labourers might take some interest, and who would suffer

from such an exercise of their rights, even if an occasional nomination emanated from the Black Bear, and resulted in a Tory candidate nominated in vestry?

We believe, then, that such an alteration as should make the rural poor careful of the expenditure of the rate, accompanied by the knowledge that they are already paying into the "sharing-out" clubs sufficient to provide them with means adequate to their requirements, would call forth the efforts of respectable farm labourers, not debarred by age or infirmity, to achieve their independence.

One other step in the advance movement of sound benefit societies would be gained by a rule that no questions should be asked of an applicant, by the board of guardians, about the relief he has from his club. The members would find it to be in the interest of their society to prevent members who endeavoured to unite, dishonestly, sickness pay and union relief. A beneficial alteration would be introduced into the society's rules of a nature and for a purpose similar to that which at present is in force, and is to the following effect: "That no member of this society shall belong to any other benefit society on pain of exclusion." The object of this is to prevent persons who can earn, when strong and hearty, fourteen or eighteen shillings a week, from receiving twenty or twenty-four shillings a week when so ill as to declare "on" the funds of the club.

The provision applied to the rate would run thus, with a necessary and proper exception:

"That no member of this society shall receive union relief when 'on the funds,' unless, in the opinion of a majority of members at the fortnightly meeting, his circumstances are considered such as entitle him to the same."

The recipient of relief under these circumstances would lose nothing of his respectability by being so reduced by distress as to be thus recommended by his club to the guardians; no person of right feeling would brand such an applicant with the term, pauper. Let us be permitted, then, to urge on the attention of the select committee appointed to report on the poor-law, the good that might come of such a reform.

Something might also be done on behalf of the friendly society by direct legislation. A central power, appointed by parliament, is required for the purpose of systematising and exercising supervision over societies now struggling alone. A central board appointed by parliament would strengthen the hands of every society it recognised. It would inform societies of their exact financial condition, and point out the steps necessary to guard against insolvency, or to recover from a position of insolvency not hopeless. It would dissociate from its care all societies whose rules and management were not trustworthy. It would have powers, by means of official trustees, to fund the property or place it in safe hands, in conformity with present provisions of the Law of Friendly Societies. The rural poor would have every public encourage-

ment which could fairly be given to their societies, and, if this were made concurrent with the change in the popular belief that the rate is their substantial though mean provision, which must not be injured by the friendly society, we should find safe and well-managed societies, or branches of them, becoming the rule instead of the exception.

#### A DIRGE.

WILL the dead Hours come again,  
From the arms of the buried Years  
Though we call, we call in vain,  
And they will not heed our tears.  
Why, O why were they slain  
By thy fears ?

Will the dead Love e'er return,  
For all thy late desire ?  
Can thy grief unclose Love's urn,  
Or make of the ashes—fire;  
Though the cinders yet may burn  
Round the pyre ?

Alas and alas for the Gone !  
We mourn and we mourn in vain,  
Like a ghost, or the dreamy tone  
Of some long-forgotten strain,  
Their memory haunts the Lone  
But with pain.

#### AUNT BELLA.

AUNT BELLA had been the eldest of a large family of brothers and sisters, all, except herself, remarkable for good looks; dark-eyed, chestnut-haired girls and boys, with clear cut features and sunnery cheeks and lips. Their parents dying early, she had fallen into the troubous inheritance of the mother's cares without her blessings, and had so soon dropped her own little comforts and preferences, and left them behind so far out of sight in tending and caring for her troublesome brood, that she totally forgot to look back for them, and so came to live in other folks' life far more than in her own.

She had passed all her maiden life in London, and could speak as an eye witness of strange things I had read of, and people whom I took to be pretty nearly as mythical as my well-beloved Sindbad and Aladdin. She remembered Lord George Gordon's No Popery riots, and her brothers' rushing in with scared faces and the stifling scent of fire about them, from the place where Lord Mansfield's noble library and rich furniture were a-blaze. She had curseyed to George the Third pottering about his gardens at Kew, and she had once, by what chance I utterly forget, been in the mysterious penetralia of the palace itself, where she had enjoyed a glimpse of the "sweet Queen," of Madame d'Arblay's adoration just returned from morning service, and sitting weazened and grotesque, with a sallow visage and a grand point-lace fly-cap, amidst a group of florid Princess-daughters in lilac taffety with green top-knots on their powdered curls, and looking like a bunch of

full-blown auriculas. "And not one of them my dear," quoth Aunt Bella, "dared, for the life of her, sit down in her mother's presence without special permission, however her poor young legs might ache with standing."

Then there was the delightful story of the tea-party at Mrs. Betty Deering's, a quondam schoolfellow and friend of Aunt Bella's, where she had had the honour of contemplating Doctor Johnson at feeding time. "All the women my dear," she would say, "ran mad about the great Dr. Johnson in those days. He was as much the fashion as mode silk and point ruffles, though for my part I declare I found him vastly unmannered and loutish the only time I ever was in his company. For though poor Mrs. Betty had asked a choice little party of ladies to meet him, and though she spent the best part of two days in her pastry-closet, rolling out the cakes and whipping raspberry creams to please his palate, he never gave her so much as a civil word for all her pains, but sat glowering and sulking and supping up dish after dish of tea as fast as she could serve him with them, till I thought he looked more like Burly Bruin in the story book, gobbling down the hot porridge, than a book-writing human Doctor. And all the ladies sat round the table, nervously smoothing down their laced aprons or playing with their fans, not daring even to whisper to one another, much less venture on a remark to the great man, not even clever Miss Letitia, Mrs. Betty's youngest sister, who I know had been hard at her books for a week before, that she might distinguish herself in conversing with him.

"At last, my dear, when tea was nearly over, and the Great Doctor had eaten and drunk more than half the dainties on the table, poor Mrs. Betty contrived to pluck up a spirit, and made a bold effort to get one little word of praise in return for all her trouble, by asking him very modestly whether he approved of the cheese-cakes—I am quite sure he had swallowed half a dozen of them at least—for they were made by her own hands from a famous receipt of her grandmother's. But instead of the pleasant word the poor soul was weak enough to look for, Bruin turned upon her as sharply as could be, with a snap and a growl.

"Madam," says he, "if your cook had had the making of them, she would have done more justice to your grandmother's recipe!"

"What a flutter it put us all in, especially poor vapourish Mrs. Betty; and how glad we were when the Great Doctor rolled himself surly out of the parlour before the tea-things were removed. It was like having a nightmare taken off all our hearts, and we grew quite sociable and merry, after Mrs. Betty had swallowed a double dose of her drops to get over the disappointment. I remember we talked about the new French dances, which were thought so charming, and which I had never seen. I know we talked of them that evening, because when we were all standing up to take leave, old Mrs. Di Vavasour, who had been a beauty and a great

toast fifty years before, and who had just been describing to us the fine birthnight parties she had shone at in her teens, insisted upon giving us a few steps as a sample of what she called the passy-pied, which was a favourite dance in her days, though I don't believe she had the name of it quite right. And so with her hood on, and her gown tucked up for walking home, brisk Mrs. Di went tripping about to show us the figure, till her stout quilted petticoat, being unused to such gay doings, broke loose and fell about her heels, and so put an end to her dancing."

Sometimes, but only when she was quite sure of godpapa\* not being at hand to hear her, Aunt Bella would indulge me with a song, or at least a scrap of one, in a small treble, cracked and weak, but perfectly in tune, and not without some taste and feeling in the using. Her ear was admirably correct, and she had once learned to play a little on the harpsichord: enough to "pick out" the store of tunes she knew, which had been a great pleasure to her in a quiet way, "But when I married, dear," said she, one day, "Captain Vance—" she never spoke of him familiarly as Roger, but somehow the formal surname never sounded cold or formal in her mouth—"Captain Vance could not endure to see my brown paws fumbling over the keys, and old Mrs. Vance detested music, even if it was good, so I soon left off playing, and, indeed, I should never have made anything of music, though I love to listen to it dearly."

Of all Aunt Bella's ditties I think my favourite was a fragment of a ballad tacked to a sort of rub-a-dub monotonous tune, and ending with the refrain of "I shan't get to sleep to night!" But what the rest of it was about, I have long utterly forgotten, except that there was something about "snakes" and "fire" in it, which gave the whole composition a smack of diablerie, greatly to my fancy.

Then there was the well-known song from the Beggar's Opera, which so often does duty now in modern ball-rooms, as a dance tune. I learned it first from dear Aunt Bella's lips, and were I to try to sing it now, in a voice scarcely less quavering than hers was then, I should surely catch myself adorning the tune with the little old-fashioned trill and shake of the head, with which she always accompanied a certain high note long drawn out with coquettish emphasis towards the close of the strain.

She had an outlandish song too, with what she called Polish words, of which I fancy she understood as little as I did, and perhaps, after all, they were mere gibberish, but Aunt Bella believed in their genuineness, for she had learned them from a schoolfellow who was the child of a Russian merchant. The tune was quaint and barbarous enough I am sure to have been Chinese, and each verse ended with the words, "To mi dola, To mi dola," and then, in a little bird-twitter, "pree, pree, pree, pree, pree!" with which the song died out.

\* See page 323 of the present volume.

When in a merry mood (and that was not seldom) I used to hear Aunt Bella as I came in, "brumming" over her work a comical old pet stave which I never heard sung by anyone else, though, for aught I know, it may be to be found in one of the plays she had seen in her childhood. Rare or common, its roystering curtness used to delight me, and thus it ran, duly pointed here and there with satirical emphasis :

Master Tom is married,  
Pray what says St. Paul?  
If I'm not mistaken,  
"Marry not at all!"  
Boys, before you marry,  
Mind the golden rule,  
Look before you leap,  
Or else you'll play the fool!

For my delectation, too, on grand occasions, Aunt Bella would perform a moral and descriptive nursery ballad, entitled, "Go to Church, Kitty." The words, looked at now through the spectacles of my latter days, seem a sort of versified Whole Duty of Woman, for the use of the prim little damsels of old mother-in-law Vance's time, in breast-knots and high-heeled shoes; though, indeed, it might give useful rudimentary instruction to the present improved generation in the social duties of their after life. The ballad was in the form of a dialogue between "Kitty," who seemed to be a maiden of low degree, and her admirer, whose superior rank was delicately hinted at by his appearing only under the title of "Mr. Gentleman." One fine Sunday morning, Mr. Gentleman opens the conversation as follows :

Go to church, Kitty!  
Go! go! go!

(Kitty, answering con fuoco.)

No! Mr. Gentleman,  
No! no! no!

(Mr. Gentleman, astonished.)

For why? For why? Miss Kitty, for why?

(Kitty, doggedly.)

Because I can't go to church like a Ladye.

Here the poet strikes in with a description of the subsequent action, pithy in matter, though faulty in rhyme :

O then, Mr. Gentleman, he bespoke,  
And a fine silk gown for Kitty was bought.

Mr. Gentleman, now confident of success, again attempts to lead Miss Kitty in the way she should go, but again unsuccessfully. Once more Miss Kitty pertly replies with her "No! no! no!" and her swain once more attempts to influence her by the gift of some other choice article of dress. "A fine straw hat," for instance, or, "A fine lace veil," but all to no purpose. The art of the singer used to consist in protracting the dénouement as long as possible, by enumerating all the contents of a fine lady's wardrobe, one by one, whether they would fit into the verse or no. At last, after half an hour's haggling, driven to desperation by repeated refusals, Mr. Gentleman chances to hit on the attractive bait of "a gold ring," at which the

cunning little hussy was aiming all the time, and she fairly forgets herself in the joy of her success, and answers in an allegro movement :

O yes, Mr. Gentleman!—now I will go!  
O, now I will go! O, now I will go!

Whereupon, in a hazy vision of wedding finery, the audience applauds rapturously, and the performance closes.

Poor, patient Aunt Bella! How I used to worry her, by pertinaciously insisting on Mr. Gentleman offering more and more bribes of pretty things to his wily sweetheart; though I knew, with a child's quickness, that finery was not her *forte*! I could see even then that she had no notion of setting off her homely little person to the best advantage; nay, she would often make her appearance in raiment of such incongruous forms and colours, that my dear mother, who made her own spare but graceful figure a very model of quakerish neatness, used sometimes to remonstrate with her on the subject, as seriously as if those terrible buff chintzes a grand ramage, and those salmon-coloured and blue-striped taffettes—I always marvelled where she got them, unless they were relics of her London days—were really signs of some great moral delinquency. But it was all of no use. Aunt Bella's taste was not to be reformed by precept or example. She still persisted in fastening fantastic poufs (I think she called them) of spotted muslin round her grizzled hair, instead of decent caps; held pertinaciously to high-heeled shoes to her life's end; and was never seen without a flounced apron of some sort. Yet, Heaven knows it was no inherent love of finery that made Aunt Bella obstinate in her eccentricities of dress, for she never put on, to my knowledge, the few trinkets she possessed. They were heirlooms of some value, inherited from cross old Mrs. Vance. One day, I remember her showing me a beautiful little antique ring, a diamond and ruby star; and my asking her why she never wore it? How she laughed, dear soul, at the question! "Why, Boonie, dear," she answered—Boonie was the pet name she always called me by; but its derivation is utterly lost to me in the mists of infancy—"why, Boonie, do you think these ivory hands of mine are likely to be improved by putting jewels on them?"

I thought they did not want improving, and I told her so.

"Ah, child!" said she, "but I know better; and so I told Captain Vance, when he tried to smarten me up, years and years ago, with a pearl suit from Hamlet's. We were living near P—then (the cathedral town where the glee club was), and my beloved had been up to town about some improved telescope, which he was very anxious to get, and which cost a world of money."

I must stop a moment to think over the sweet cadence which that strangely-poetical title, "my beloved," pronounced in three distinct syllables, used to have in Aunt Bella's mouth, and how far from laughable it sounded, though applied by a homely old woman to her homely old

husband of thirty long years. She often spoke of him so; always, in the few months which separated his death from hers, except when she was more than commonly moved, and then she would call her departed husband "that dear angel."

But to go back to the story of the pearl suit from Hamlet's

"When he came back from town," said Aunt Bella, "bringing the telescopes and all sorts of scientific instruments besides, he put a little purple morocco case into my hands, and told me, very pleasantly, that I must wear its contents for his sake, and that he had bought them quite a bargain, owing to the fashion of them having somewhat gone out. Then he went into his study, and shut himself in with his packing-cases till tea-time. In the meanwhile of course I opened the case, and there, child, lay the loveliest pearl brooch and earrings, with a twist of seed pearl for the neck! How sorry I felt, for I knew I must pain him by begging him to send them back, lest he should be more pained by seeing me wear them. But for all that I could not help standing before the glass and trying the pretty twist round my old throat; but, Lord! child, it made me look like a blackamoor, so I turned away pretty quickly, and popped it into the morocco case, and never looked at it again. It pained me sorely to tell my beloved that indeed, indeed, I could not wear his beautiful present, and that with his leave I would very much rather have it changed for the silver coffee-pot we had long talked of buying.

"At first he thought me silly and unkind, and was quite crusty about my refusal, and for three or four days he hardly spoke a word to me, nor would he let me do anything for him as usual (the consequence of which was that he caught a terrible chill from putting on his under-waist-coats unaired, for he regularly put back in the drawer those that I warmed and set out for him). And all those days I did nothing but cry and repent what I had done to pain my kind husband, and twenty times I wanted to tell him I would keep the pearl suit and wear it, or dress myself out as a May-day queen, sooner than he should be angry with me. But when he was laid up with the sore-throat, he grew quite pleasant again, and let me come about him, and never so much as mentioned the cause I had given him for vexation. And then I found out that the morocco case had gone back to Hamlet's in exchange for the tall silver coffee-pot with the ebony handle, which stands in the eating-room cupboard, and I do think I like it the better because it cost me all those tears; for you see after all, Boonie dear, Captain Vance indulged me in the very thing I wished."

When godpapa returned from his walk, he had always his superannuated pointer Duke following at his heels. A respectable quadruped was Duke, who spent the greater part of his days grumbling in a remarkably small green kennel in the court, and whom I consider as the dog of the most imperturbable demeanour and the stumpiest tail I ever saw. Godpapa Vance

always dressed for dinner; that is, he had a whole armour suit of wraps to lay aside, and a somewhat lighter panoply to put on—I do believe he changed his raiment with every breeze that blew—and, for some mysterious reason past my finding out, a black ribbon always spanned the stone-coloured waistcoat at dinner-time, sustaining a small eye-glass, which I do not think he ever used.

Dinner was rather a solemn affair, to be sure, and neither Aunt Bella nor I seemed to be talking our own talk while it lasted; but I used to pardon the dulness of the feast, in consideration of its daintiness; and then we were soon upstairs again, and godpapa went straight to his studies or his slumbers, and did not appear in the drawing-room for hours. In the interval, Aunt Bella and I would trot in and out of the flower-beds in the little square of garden over the way, where bees and butterflies always seemed more alert than elsewhere, round the musky purple scabious bushes and the long sprays of sweet blush roses at the gate. When it was damp or windy, and we stayed in-doors, an episode would sometimes occur, in which, to my shame be it spoken, I used always to take especial diversion.

I have mentioned the splendid cabbage-roses which grew round the windows of the basement story in Meadow-row. Those roses were the object of frequent predatory attacks by the idle boys of South-cove, as Aunt Bella well knew, and she seemed to feel by instinct when a party of young Bedouins were stealing round the house-corner by the steps, to clutch a branch of the fragrant flowers and scamper down the road with their booty. In the first years when I knew her, and even after her sight began to fail, she would noiselessly raise the sash of the corner window, just enough to put out her head, and watch the small malefactors creeping along the railings. But no sooner did they stretch their hands towards the prize, than up would go the sash to its full height with a bang, and Aunt Bella, towering awfully in her fortalice, would launch after the fugitives, as they took to their heels, a volley of such unearthly inarticulate noises, compounded of groaning, shrieking, and cackling, that I am sure I wonder how they had the courage ever to return to their nefarious enterprise. And to make the explosion of her wrath more effective, the kitchen-door on the side steps would be sure at such times to fly open, and Tackett or Keziah would rush madly out, duster in hand, make vigorous demonstration at the retreating foe, and they would come back panting in a few moments, distanced by about a quarter of a mile.

I do not think I ever stood within the sacred precincts of Godpapa Vance's study by daylight. It was only in the evening dusk, by special invitation, that we children were allowed to put foot within that awful chamber, lined on two sides with book-shelves, and on a third with prim little black cabinets, filled with pale unmeaning-looking shells and preserved beetles of

vicious aspect. The window, which took up nearly all the fourth side of the room, used to be open on these solemn occasions, and, on the side of the writing-table nearest to the light, were displayed such of the aforesaid shells or insects as godpapa thought fit to call upon us to admire. His large wicker arm-chair and a smaller chair opposite to it were the only sitting accommodation in the room. Large smooth mahogany instrument cases there were in plenty; but what mortal child would have dared make free with their mysterious support, under the very eye of the great enchanter, and the surveillance of the tall violoncello case which stood stark in the corner by the window, like a corpulent familiar?

There were evenings which were marked by a more than common solemnity, however, when not only I, but all my mother's little tribe of nestlings, ranging between four and nine years old, used to be summoned to the celebration of the mysteries in godpapa's study. On these occasions it was dark before we were called in, and when we entered, the largest telescope was planted in front of the open window, and the lamp had a large green shade on, which made the room so dark that it was very difficult for our restless young legs not to entangle themselves in some of the manifold stumbling-blocks which encumbered the floor. Then after weary pauses of preparation, occupied by godpapa in pointing the telescope, wiping the lenses, and going through other cabalistic forms, we were called forward one by one and directed to, peep at Jupiter, or Saturn, or the mountains in the moon. And, indeed, it was all pretty much the same to us which of the heavenly bodies we were expected to see, for godpapa was always dreadfully cross and fidgety on those momentous evenings, and we were frightened and awkward, and the sky was generally full of clouds, and the stars were pertinaciously obstinate in playing bo-peep among their featherly folds, so that I can answer for those provoking planets more often than otherwise disguising themselves in the form of huge black lumps suspiciously like the opposite chimney-pots to my eyes, except on one or two occasions, when the apparition of something bright scurrying, as it seemed to me, across the corner of the lens, made me jump backward in such trepidation as once to bring the back of my head into unpleasant collision with the chronometer-case behind me.

It was only on those awful telescope evenings that Aunt Bella took part in our scientific pursuits in the study. She would be in and out of the room a dozen times in half an hour, and, when invited, would apply her eye to the glass and ejaculate, "Ah! wonderful!" years after, dear soul! she had ceased to be able clearly to distinguish even the stitches in her netting. I know, now, that she hustled in and out, that she might be always ready to cloak our awkwardness and smooth away a sharp word from godpapa, with a caress bestowed in the gloom on some little curly head, or by the stealthy present of a morsel of the candied iris root that always lurked

in the queer little old world bonbonnière of chased silver, with a brown agate in the lid, which she carried in her pocket.

The only time I ever heard Aunt Bella offer a word of remonstrance to her lord, was on one of these evenings, when he had driven us nearly wild with his crusty ways and his prohibitions not to move or speak, or do anything but what it was utterly impossible we should do, namely, see some astronomical conglomeration announced as forthcoming on that night. Then, hearing by some small sniffs and gurgling gasps that the younger ones were on the brink of a demonstration, dear Aunt Bella charitably hustled the delinquents out upon the landing-place, exclaiming with a backward glance, "Roger Vance! Roger Vance!"—this, I suppose, was her culminating symptom of irritation—"don't make the children fancy you are angry with them;" and so swept us off to a game at beggar-my-neighbour or hunt the slipper. So those astronomical recreations, if they were thorny times to us, were no less stormy and anxious for Aunt Bella.

#### THE GIRLS THEY LEAVE BEHIND THEM.

THE British soldier fighting the battles of his country, and returning after his term of service to his native village, a bronzed veteran, with medals on his breast and money in his pocket, to gratify the pride and relieve the necessities of his parents in their declining years—is certainly a cheering spectacle. But the British soldier getting drunk and infuriate, smashing heads with pewter pots in public-houses, and taking the opportunity of being turned out to run a muck in the streets, and attack the passers-by with his belt, is as certainly depressing to the well-regulated mind. The British soldier, in fact, is a very noble fellow, when he does not happen to be a savage, which his best friends must admit he occasionally is. I know that there has generally been a difference of opinion among high military authorities as to how far it is desirable to make him quite respectable. The Duke of Wellington said, as the result of his experience, that the greatest rascals always fought the best; and this opinion is probably not unrepresented among commanding officers in the present day. Soldiers' libraries, soldiers' clubs, soldiers' workshops, and all the other modern means of improving the intellectual and moral condition of the men, do not find such general favour among their superiors as might be supposed. There are still colonels of the "good" old school who would tell you in confidence—as George the Third gave his opinion of Shakespeare—"It won't do to say so, you know, but all this new-fashioned nonsense is ruining the men. What have they to do with books, and having their condition ameliorated, as they call it? By Jove, sir! if this goes on they will get a great deal too clever for discipline, and what will become of the service then?"

Our representative colonel exactly hits the point in his last remark. The educated soldier is a great deal too clever a fellow for the kind of discipline which used to be enforced, but which it has been found safe to modify in deference to the improved material. If the experiment has succeeded so far, why not carry it a great deal further? Our volunteers, who may be supposed to be all persons of respectable education, do not find drill and its attendant duties incompatible with intelligence and knowledge; and although they are, of course, not so hard worked as the professional soldier, still it must be remembered that the latter has nothing else but soldiering to do. The fact is, that education assists discipline instead of destroying it, provided that the discipline be enforced with proper judgment. And here we have the secret of the objection entertained by the old school. Ignorant ruffianism is easier to govern than intelligent respectability. It is less difficult to deal with a pack of hounds through the medium of an active whipper-in, than to keep a body of men in order, mainly by moral force—men with brains and tongues, to say nothing of hearts, and who have perceptions and feelings in common with those who control them. The highest military authority has officially informed a certain officer who held a rather conspicuous position for many days at Aldershot, a short time since, that temper, judgment, and discretion ("or words to that effect") are the first qualities necessary for command. The dictum applies forcibly to the relation between officers and officers and the relation between officers and men. As for the idea that a fighting-man must be a thorough blackguard, it is one disproved by constant experience.

It is scarcely necessary to give special reasons for urging the intellectual and moral improvement of any class of men. But as it has been held that the soldier must not be improved, upon practical grounds, we may venture to give a reason why he should be improved, upon practical grounds also. The question of promotion from the ranks has always been a difficult one, and, while it remains as it is, it can scarcely be said to be settled. The old companions of a man so promoted he must renounce altogether; and, with his new companions, he can scarcely be considered at home. By the mess he may be reckoned a capital fellow, and he may be highly popular; but he is somehow not "one of them" in general society, and the difficulty is the more marked if he have a wife. For it is not likely that any long course of meritorious conduct which that probably estimable woman may have pursued, is known to anybody but her husband. Even were her merits recognised, the crown has no power to give a commission to a lady which will compel her to be accepted by her own sex. The consequence is, that, unless in a very exceptional case, she will meet with nothing more than bare toleration, and, feeling herself considerably more out of place than her husband, will shun society, contenting herself by putting in an appearance

at an occasional great gathering, in order to show her right to be there.

The march of a regiment from its old quarters is a gay gallant spectacle. "The Girl I left behind me," played by the band, has an exhilarating sound, and suggests a romantic young person, such as you see in pictures, taking an affectionate leave of a splendid-looking fellow in full uniform and curled moustache; the scene, a pleasant bit of country close to a stile with a church spire just visible through the trees. The young lady vows to be true to him for an indefinite time—generally understood to be "seven long years"—and he, on his part, is never to forget her—nev-er! The love passages of the ranks, however, have not been uniformly of a cheering character to contemplate, and those of its members who have entered into the bonds of wedlock are worse off than their less scrupulous comrades: a state of things not quite as it should be. They have married with the consent of their commanding officers, and their wives are borne on what is called "the strength of the regiment." These comparatively fortunate partners accompany them, and are provided for equally with themselves. But only a small number are allowed to each company; and the men who have married without waiting for a vacancy—as large numbers do in every regiment while in quarters—are ruthlessly torn away from their families, who are frequently left without the smallest provision. During the absence of the regiment their case is hard enough, for they have no recognition from authority, and, without recognition, they can have no rations. A certain proportion of soldiers' wives may manage to obtain an honest living; but the majority—and it is of no use blinking the fact—obtain a living which is not honest, and which cannot be considered reputable by any stretch of charity. It may be said that the men should not marry without their colonel's consent when they know the chances to which they and their wives will be exposed. But the argument is worth nothing. It is as useless to preach prudence of this kind to soldiers, as to any other class. Those who err in this respect, be it remembered, are not likely to be the *worst* men in a regiment.

A great deal is being done for the soldier in these days. He is well fed; he is well clothed; and, if he be not too well paid, he is none the worse off for it; for the possession of money means the temptation to spend it in liquor, the great enemy of himself and the service. He has a great deal of liberty for the purpose of exercise; he has clubs, and in some stations he has workshops. He has every opportunity for educating himself and cultivating his mind. But all these advantages will never make him what he should be, so long as his domestic relations remain what they are. Even when he has married with proper regard to the regulations of the service, when his wife is lodged and otherwise provided for by the state, his is a very curious kind of home life. Only the other day—during a celebrated trial—it was urged that the wife even of a non-commissioned officer could not have been

annoyed by having a sentry placed near her sick bed, as she had never been used to greater privacy, and had no feelings to be outraged. Let promotion from the ranks be extended as you will; but it must always be impossible to place men and women who have become reconciled to the accommodation afforded to soldiers and their wives and subjected to the influences naturally arising therefrom, on a real equality with gentlemen and ladies. The gulf between the two classes is felt on the one side equally with the other; and, so strongly on one side in particular, that non-commissioned officers have repeatedly refused commissions because they knew the mingling to be a mere mockery. If therefore the condition of the soldier be ever to be really improved, it must be through a change in his domestic condition, and towards this object we are glad to see that a very useful suggestion has lately been made.

The suggestion comes all the way from Madras, and it is something to say in its favour that it has been acted upon there with success. It consists in the establishment of "Female Workshops"—which might be more correctly described as Workshops for Females—in some of the European regiments. One of these is now maintained in connexion with the Sixty-ninth Foot, at Fort St. George. But the experiment has been tried on a more extensive scale by Brigadier-General Grant, commanding the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force. This officer has, at his own expense, established workshops for females in the European corps under his command; and so successful has he found their operation that he has suggested to the government the introduction of the system throughout the army. The effect of the measure is not only to furnish employment of a remunerative kind to the wives of soldiers, but to produce valuable moral benefits. It is stated that the local government has refused to forward the Brigadier-General's suggestions, to the home authorities—upon what Un-Circumlocutional ground it would be difficult to conceive—but they deserve attention none the less, even though received through an irregular channel. In England, such institutions would be productive of immense good. The clothing of the troops, for instance, is now supplied on the contract system: why should it not be made in workshops established at the head-quarters of every regiment, and more especially at the stations of the dépôt battalions? In that case, not only could the greater number, if not all, of the wives of the men be employed, but a direct advantage would accrue to government from this disposal of the work. Soldiers' clothing is now made by miserable creatures in dens which are a frequent source of disease. It is obvious that the work could be better performed in large and well ventilated workshops, and the discipline of such establishments could not fail to have a good moral effect.

We have heard of the experiment being tried somewhere, of clubs in which the wives and families of soldiers are admitted with the men.

This is a plan which would be worth considering—at any rate as regards one part of the club-building. Objections might be made on the score of the too intimate association involved. But the association could surely not be more intimate than that necessitated in barracks: while the mingling might be conducive to outward propriety, which is a very good preparation for better things.

Some comparison has been made between our military system and that of France. It can scarcely be said that they manage things better in the latter country as regards soldiers' wives. In the French army, marriage, even among officers, is discouraged as much as possible. To wed without permission is a military offence, and the proportion of married soldiers is very small. But the arrangement is open to objections which would be so strongly felt in England, that it may be considered altogether inapplicable to our army.

The material condition of the soldier is receiving every kind of attention. Let his moral condition be improved by domestic influences, and his professional utility cannot fail to improve itself. By having care for soldiers' wives, we shall not only save them from degradation, but shall promote the welfare of their husbands, and through them conduce to the interests of the service; which, just now, is in much need of enlistments, and especially of re-enlistments.

#### TOO LATE FOR COPENHAGEN.

"LAND HO!" sung out the sailor from aloft, bending down from his giddy perch on the yard-arm, and using his hand as a speaking-trumpet. The captain sprang into the rigging and swept the horizon with his glass. I imitated his example, as I was weary of my floating prison. "Land it is!" said Captain Brown, cheerfully; "not in that direction, though, Mr. Compton, sir. You are looking at Fehmern. The mainland lies on the starboard tack. Mind what you're doing, you, there, at the helm. Keep her full, can't ye?—there's Holstein. Looms low, don't it, and yet land's always attractive to a passenger!"

By-and-by we stood into the pretty fiord at the extremity of which stands Kiel. The setting sun turned the smooth waters of the bay into rippling gold, and I looked forward with pleasure to the prospect of landing. The Emma was the property of Hallett and Jones, my employers, who did a great business both with Hamburg and the Baltic ports. She was laden with a valuable cargo of hardware, drugs, dyewoods, and sheet lead, to say nothing of several hundred tons of the rails required for one of the first of the Danish railways. These goods were consigned to a well-known firm, Krantz and Co., of Kiel, wealthy and well-known merchants with whom our house had had extensive transactions. And I, who was in the full confidence of my principals, had been sent as supercargo. Now-a-days, supercargoes are

seldom needed for even the most valuable freights, save in the China trade. But there were other reasons for my mission. Messrs. Krantz were debited in our books for considerable sums; and, although their commercial fame was spotless and their wealth undisputed, it was thought desirable that a balance should be struck. There were long and complicated accounts to go through, and it had appeared advisable to my chiefs that I should inspect the papers and receive the money; the rather that I could take the opportunity of my presence in Denmark to inquire into the real nature of certain investments at Copenhagen which had been represented to us as excellent. I was to come back in the brig, which was to take in, at Copenhagen, a return freight of Baltic wheat. It had been settled that without waiting for the Emma's unloading, I was to hasten to the capital by way of Schleswig and Jutland.

When we dropped anchor in Kiel harbour, the last crimson flush of the sunset had died out on the horizon, with its ever-green oaks, rolling sand-bluffs, flat pastures, and thousand windmills. On the following morning I set off, guided by one of the hangers-on of the hotel where I had spent the night, in search of the residence of the Messrs. Krantz. The guide, a Dutch lad in a green jacket and wooden shoes, was loud in his praise of the wealth and merits of our correspondents. It was old Myneher Krantz, he declared, who had first turned the stream of Baltic traffic into Kiel Bay; it was he who had encouraged the setting up of manufactures in the town; it was he who had, at his own charges, cleared away a dangerous sand-bar on which many a vessel had struck when the wind was easterly, and the currents too strong to be resisted. Krantz and Co. had thriven wonderfully. They were very rich. The narrator ought to know, for had he not a brother, Rupert—his own name was Clauss, at my service—who was messenger in their office? They were liberal masters. And then their charity to the poor, their hospitality, and their tulips! Clauss, like a true Hollander, grew eloquent on the score of the tulips of Messrs. Krantz, father and son, for the Co. appeared to be mythical. And before he had finished we stood before the merchant's door.

A fine old house, large though low, and built of brickwork covered over with a sort of glossy cement of a pinkish colour, seamed by huge black beams of oak, heavy and stout enough to have been the timbers of a line-of-battle ship. The latticed windows, framed in a thick growth of creepers, had queer old diamond panes set in lead, queer mullions of carved stone, and little polished reflectors placed outside those of the lowest story, to convey to the inmates the images of persons passing in the street without, exactly such as I had seen before in Flemish towns. Behind the house was a huge walled garden, flanked by conservatories, and one wing of the mansion was devoted to the counting-house; through the window of which I could see the grey head of an elderly cashier bending over a

heap of papers and glittering coin. The brass-plate, on which were inscribed the words "Krantz and C°," was as bright as Mambrino's helmet; and from the stork's nest on the roof to the moss-grown pavement, everything looked venerable, quiet, and serene.

M. Krantz himself was from home, but I was cordially received by his son and junior partner, Paul Krantz, one of the finest young fellows I had ever seen; tall and fair-faced, with bright honest blue eyes and yellow hair. He was some years younger than myself, being about five or six-and-twenty, but was married. He and his young wife and children resided with his father, who was a widower and had no son but Paul.

"We have been duly advised of your purpose in visiting Kiel, Mr. Compton," said the young merchant, as he shook hands with me; "and though my father was unfortunately unable to remain at home to receive you, we can, if you please, complete the necessary arrangements without waiting his return. Captain Brown has already looked in upon us with the Emma's bills of lading and the invoices, and I am quite prepared to go through the accounts and hand over the money to your safe keeping."

We—M. Paul and I—had a rather severe morning's work over the voluminous accounts, with all the mass of vouchers, letters, bills, couched in every language written throughout Northern Europe; but at last we came to a satisfactory conclusion. A considerable sum was due to Hallett and Jones, and this sum tallied, within a few marks banco, with the amount of my chiefs' estimate. The cashier was summoned.

"Now, monsieur, we can give you your choice," said the young Dane, smiling good humouredly, "how you will take the balance. Gold, or bills on London I cannot at this moment offer you; but silver, or Hamburg notes, or Russian paper roubles, or notes of the Royal Bank of Denmark, or Dutch coupons: to all and any of these you are heartily welcome. Shall we pay in silver rix-dollars? I only warn you that the weight will prove rather cumbersome."

"Why, yes," said I, hesitating, as I remembered that a sack of no small size and a porter would then become necessary to the conveyance of the sum of which I was to be the temporary custodian, and hastily computed the various cares and annoyances inseparable from such unwieldy treasures; "yes, I think I will take the balance in Danish bank paper."

And, in Danish bank paper, the money was duly paid over to me in exchange for my receipt. The notes were securely lodged in my big black leather pocket-book, steel chained and patent locked, and always heedfully kept in an inner breast-pocket of my coat. My reason for selecting Danish notes in preference to Hamburg notes was, that as I was bound for Copenhagen, where I had to inquire, as I have previously said, respecting the eligible character of certain investments, I was sure of being able to exchange the notes for good bills on London,

or government securities, without losing by the transfer; which would not have been the case had I chosen the German currency. Business over, M. Paul Krantz expressed much hospitable regret that I would absolutely insist on leaving Kiel that very day. He had hoped, he said, that I should have been able to stay as a guest under the family roof for a day or two at least, that he might have the pleasure of showing me such humble lions as Holstein could boast of, and that I should have stayed long enough to have made acquaintance with his father, my correspondent, who, his son was good enough to say, had heard much praise of me when he met my chiefs in London a year ago.

However, I could not linger; for the journey by land through the southern part of the Danish peninsula would, I knew, be slow, and I was desirous to have time, not only to make the needful inquiries regarding the much-vaunted investment, but also to explore the museums and other stock sights of Copenhagen before the Emma should have completed her unloading and be ready for her return freight. I had arranged for the hire of a light carriage, and had bespoken post-horses, and must really go northward that afternoon.

"You will lunch with us, at any rate. I will give Margaret a hint to advance the dinner hour," said the young representative of the great firm of Krantz, who spoke French and English with equal fluency. Then, suddenly he frowned and started, exclaiming, "Hundsfot! What does the fellow want, staring in after that fashion? Arnold, Rupert, ask his business, some of you!"

I turned hastily. All I could see was the fast-vanishing figure of a tall man, wearing one of those loose rough coats that sailors call "gregoës," and a red Sclavonian cap, such as Baltic mariners affect. Not a glimpse of his face could I catch; but there was something suspicious in the hurry with which he was shuffling off. Paul assured me that he saw the ruffian greedily eyeing the heaps of notes and silver which the old cashier, Herr Niklas Frost, had spread upon the desk beside me. However, Arnold and Rupert, the two messengers, came back merely to report that the stranger had made off at a brisk pace in the direction of the wharfs, and that they thought him a Russian seaman, by his gait and attire. M. Paul broke into a cheery laugh, saying:

"I am afraid Mr. Compton will report us Danes as singularly timorous folks, startled at shadows, but the face I saw was no pleasant one, and the way the rogue gloated over the money on that desk was not encouraging to a merchant. But come, let me offer you some refreshment, and introduce you to Madame Krantz."

I was introduced to Madame Krantz, a very pretty young woman, with the dazzling complexion and pale gold hair for which many of the North Jutlanders are celebrated, and also to the two charming little children, Christian and Ellice (which latter name corresponds to our English Alice), and I was shown everything worth seeing in the house and gardens. Such wealth of tulips,

assorted like the patterns of some rich mosaic pavement and blooming gloriously; such a rose garden; such wall-fruit, and stocks, and dahlias, and quaint old-world blossoms, I had never before beheld. And the pictures—choice old battle-pieces, pretty bits of pastoral scenery, the work of Dutch masters, or of the best artists of that Danish school that learned to use the brush from Dutch example—were good and valuable, and harmonised with the oak panels and carved cornices, as perfectly as did the massive furniture of heavy wood and crimson velvet.

M. Paul and his pretty wife and I parted with civil regrets that our acquaintance should terminate thus early. They came out to the door to see me start, under the guidance of the red-jacketed postilion who had control over the calèche and the two heavy Holstein steeds. Travellers were at that time greater rarities in Kiel than they have become since the war began, and quite a knot of people had assembled at the corner of the street to see the Englishman drive off. Among those idlers, I recognised the tall figure in the gregó and red cap.

Off I went, clattering and rattling up the dusty road. The speed was not great, and neither coaxing nor scolding could induce my gaily-attired driver to accelerate his pace beyond the comfortable jog-trot of Holstein journeys. His good humour was incapable of being ruffled; for, however impatiently I might address him in my scanty stock of German, he did but turn his broad placid face towards me with a pleasant smile and a polite "Ja, ja, Mein Herr;" but the stout bay steeds were never much interfered with. Holstein men and Holstein horses are proverbially strong, slow, and amiable.

The sun went down long before we had traversed the sixteen English miles of dusty road lying between Kiel and Eckernförd, but there was a bright full moon that made travelling safe and easy, as well as cooler and more enjoyable than the journey by day, so I pushed on as fast as post-horses could take me, and reached the city of Schleswig soon after midnight. I allowed myself only a few hours of sleep at the quaint little hotel; starting northwards on the following morning, and so early that the dew clung in pearly clusters to every blade of grass in the great meadows to which the thousands of comely cattle were being slowly driven; the larks were just beginning to rise and warble out their morning hymn as the yellow sun shone level across the meres and meadows. I found that I really did make more rapid progress as I advanced towards the north, the horses being fleetier and less sluggish; the postilions less apathetic. My hope was to reach the Nyeborg ferry in time for the last steamer across to Seeland, and to sleep at Ringstad, take the railway on the following day, and arrive at Copenhagen before noon. To my vexation, however, while still there were long miles of road between me and the ferry, the clouds began to thicken and grow dark to seaward, while the sultry air was fanned by short

puffs of wind that shook down the yellowing leaves from the hedgerows. Sure token of a coming storm.

At one small station, in Fünen, midway between Flensburg and Odensee — where I had found the postmaster asleep and his servants absent at some village feast, and had consequently had to aid myself in harnessing the fresh horses — before the traces were quite adjusted, a cloud of dust came rolling like smoke along the road, and up dashed a “forbudd,” or avant courier, very hot and breathless, with his horse in a lather of foam, vociferating for horses.

“My master’s in a wonderful hurry, wonder-schön!” said the man, swinging himself down from his reeking saddle, and stamping his heavy boots upon the ground to get rid of the dust, “but he pays well, and wants to be well served.”

And, indeed, the animal he had ridden looked, with drooping head and spur-marked flanks, none the better for the furious rate at which she had sped along. The postmaster looked at her rather ruefully. “If I mount a forbudd for the traveller I shan’t allow him to go tearing along, wild-huntsman fashion, as thou hast, Niel Hansen. Is he some foreign ambassador, my lad, or going on the king’s service, that he ruins horseflesh in this way, all that he may get some hours earlier to Copenhagen?”

The postilion replied that he knew nothing of him. The stranger was a foreigner, but he spoke the best of Danish and German, and tossed his dollars about as children toss beach pebbles, all the time rating and expostulating with those whom he found too slow in driving or putting horses to his carriage. He was some great baron, no doubt. Perhaps a Russian or a Swede. At any rate, he was eager to hasten on, and the postmaster had better get the cattle ready forthwith. By this time my own calèche was ready, and, in the stir and exhilaration of rapid motion, I soon forgot the impatient traveller who was a few leagues behind. The roads were in unusually good order, and the latter part of my journey was speedily performed; but as I came in sight of the dark blue sea line and the white houses and low church tower of Nyeborg, the copper-coloured masses of cloud rolled sullenly up, and the peculiar gloom that precedes a summer storm fell like a veil over land and sea. Then came a flash of lightning, and as if it had been a signal for elemental war, hail and rain came dashing fiercely in our faces, making the horses swerve and rear; the thunder rolled in emulation of the roaring of the wind that suddenly sprang up. It was in a drenched and draggled condition, half blinded by the lightning, and soaked with wet, that we reached Nyeborg.

“The steamer for Korsöe?” was my first inquiry.

The landlord of the clean little inn removed his blue and white china pipe from his mouth, and pointed with the stem of it towards the ferry. I could see that the water was everywhere flecked with foam, and that no glimpse of

the opposite shore could be distinguished through the driving rain. There was no steamer visible in the little haven, except one black and silent craft, lying snugly under the shelter of some piles, with deserted deck and smokeless chimney.

“You won’t sleep in the island to-night, Herr Englander. The last boat had a tough job to struggle across. The wind’s getting round to the north, too. Not a skipper in Denmark, in his senses, would try to make the run over to Korsöe this evening, not even if his heart were as stout as old Tordenskiold’s.”

The landlord’s assertions were fully confirmed by the sailors and custom-house officers whom I found crowding together under some sheds near the wharf, and wistfully peering through the rain and gathering darkness at the tempestuous sea. It was a mere summer squall, they said, but they were afraid that mischief would be done among the fishers and small coasting craft. However, the storm would doubtless have spent its fury before morning, and the ferry would then be easily traversed, so the delay was not very serious, after all. An hour or so earlier I should have been in time to be a passenger on board the last boat that had ventured out, and, at the cost of some risk and a wetting, should have slept in Ringstad. As it was, I was too late.

The accommodation which the kro of Nyeborg offered me was of the character most common in Denmark. Everything was exquisitely clean, homely, and snug. By a slight stretch of imagination, I could have fancied myself a guest at one of those old English hostgeries that Izaak Walton selected as the rendezvous of his Piscator and Venator, that quaint type of rustic trimness with its lavender-scented sheets, sanded floors, honeysuckle-draped porch, and rude plenty. The supper that was set before me was a good one, and so was the Rhenish wine. I had not quite finished either, before I heard a rapid roll of wheels and a mighty cracking of whips. I could distinguish by the sound that a carriage drawn by four horses had dashed up to the door of the kro. Then there was a hum and clatter of voices and feet, and a tap at the door of my room. In came the hand-maiden, who combined the duties of waiter and chambermaid, and who was as spruce in her velvet bodice and scarlet kirtle, her heavy gold earrings and silver hair-skewers, as if she had no work to do. Her round blue eyes were very wide open with astonishment.

“Herr Englander,” she said, in her Jutland dialect, so like Yorkshire English in its breadth and sound, “a great knight or count has just arrived, extra-post, and—”

“—And if Mr. Compton will pardon his intrusion, he is here to answer for himself,” said another, and a stronger voice, speaking in very excellent English. A tall elderly gentleman appeared on the threshold, bowing politely to me, hat in hand, and wearing a long blue cloak, on which the rain-drops glistened. The newly-arrived traveller, no doubt. But what he could want with me? unless I should prove to be the

occupier of the only available parlour of the kro, and he wished for permission to share it, I could not guess. Probably the stranger saw my perplexity; for he said, stepping forward,

"My name is Krantz—Jorn Krantz; and when I tell you that I have travelled post-haste from Kiel, on purpose to seek a few moments' discourse with Mr. Compton of the house of Hallett and Jones, you will not, I hope, refuse to listen to me."

I made a polite reply, and begged that Mr. Krantz would be seated. He gladly removed his heavy cloak, and stood before me in his tightly-buttoned black coat, with a neat white cravat, a small diamond brooch stuck in the breast of his frilled shirt, and the party-coloured riband of some foreign decoration in one button-hole—altogether, from his grey head and calm intelligent face down to his well-polished boots, the type of an old-fashioned merchant of the highest commercial stamp. He was rather proud and stiff of bearing, though very urbane, and his voice was that of a person used to speak with authority. Disregarding my invitation to sit down and share the appetising meal that smoked upon the table, his first act was, as soon as the waiting-maid had left us to ourselves, to rise, and lock the door. Then he turned to me; and as his face came for the first time under the full light of the lamp, I could see that his features were quivering with emotion. Twice he tried to speak, and twice the words seemed to choke him; but he turned his head away, and covered his eyes with his hand, before he said, in a voice that was weak and tremulous,

"You see in me, Mr. Compton, the unhappy, almost heart-broken father of Paul Krantz. Oh, my son! my son! Fond and proud of him as I have been, what shame is this that he has brought upon my white hairs! Bear with me a moment, sir—only a moment."

And the old merchant—in whom I could not doubt that I beheld the head of the great house of Krantz and Co.—sank into a chair, covered his face with his wrinkled trembling hands, and sobbed aloud. But this emotion was soon conquered; and, then, in a broken voice and with averted face, the poor old gentleman told me what here follows:

The Krantz family had been in commerce for several generations, known for a probity and honour that were traditional among them. The first black sheep of the flock was the old merchant's only son, Paul Krantz. I started when I heard this, half incredulous of such an accusation against the fine, frank-looking young Dane whom I had so lately seen, and who had impressed me very favourably; but then the accuser was his own father! I was shocked to hear that Paul was a hypocrite, a gambler; so wedded to high play, both on the Bourse and at the lansquenetable, that he now threatened to engulf his father's whole fortune.

"All I have is his," said the old merchant, sadly; "and if he has fallen so low as to rob his father that he may be in funds for a fresh

trip to the Hamburg Exchange and the card-tables, I can bear it in silence. After all, in a few years it would, in the course of nature, have passed to him. But my good name is in danger now, and *that* I would keep free from stain at any cost. Mr. Compton, the notes in which my son paid over to you the large amount due to Hallett and Jones—those notes—" He stopped, gasping.

"What of them?" exclaimed I, getting excited in my turn, and mechanically thrusting my hand into the inner pocket, where the steel-bound pocket-book lay securely.

"Those notes are forgeries!" answered the merchant, hoarsely.

And then the rest of the sad story came out. Paul Krantz had wilfully misled his father as to the probable date of my arrival to settle our account with the Kiel firm. He had had considerable losses of late in some wild stock-jobbing speculations on the Paris Bourse, and his agents had threatened him with exposure if the deficit were not made good. Desperate, and confiding in his father's indulgence to bear him scathless in case of discovery, the unhappy young man had contrived that his parent should be absent from home at the time of my arrival, and had paid me in fictitious notes, a large quantity of which, availing himself of his master-key, he had previously lodged in the cash-box. These notes were in a manner forced upon me, as a conjuror forces a card, for even had I chosen to encumber myself with the silver, there were not nearly enough dollars in the counting-house to liquidate the claim of my employers.

"I returned, and suspecting that something was amiss, interrogated my son, and examined the books and the cash," said the merchant. "Paul prevaricated at first, but presently made a full confession, imploring mercy, not only on account of the ties of blood between us, but for the sake of his innocent wife—she, sir, knows nothing of his errors, and his disgrace and his punishment would kill her outright. And therefore, without losing a moment, I started on your traces, using every exertion to overtake you, which, however, but for the most lucky incident of your being detained here, I should hardly have done on this side of Copenhagen. And once there, you would, doubtless, have presented the notes, when discovery—scandal—"

And here he broke off, groaning, but soon found voice again to tell me the object of his haste. He entreated, drawing a thick rouleau of bank-notes from his bosom, to be permitted to redeem, with genuine paper of the Royal Danish Bank, those forged securities that I had so unsuspectingly accepted from his guilty son. The loss, as he justly remarked, ought, in no case, to fall on Hallett and Jones, and he would willingly make any sacrifice to prevent a stigma from falling on the spotless reputation of Krantz and Co. Paul was frightened, if not penitent, and his father was resolved to send him to America, trusting that change of scene and

habits might wean him from evil. If I would kindly pledge myself to breathe no word of the transaction until I should see my employers, disgrace might yet be avoided.

I consented. My duty to Hallett and Jones was clear, and, besides, it would have been very damaging to my future prospects to have earned the imputation of having neglected the interests of employers so kind and liberal as my chiefs. The grief of that noble old man would have melted a harder heart than mine, and I readily made him the required promise. The notes were duly counted out and the exchange effected, and it was with a sigh of relief that I secured the true bank-paper under lock and key in my stout black leather pocket-book. As I did so, M. Krantz held out his hand and shook mine heartily, and announced his intention of returning home at once, without repose, to complete his arrangements for the reformation of his misguided boy. He at once rang the bell and ordered his horses to be got ready. In half an hour we parted company, with thanks and blessings on the old merchant's part.

"Old Jorn Krantz is your friend for life, remember," he said, as he threw his cloak over his shoulders and stepped into the carriage; "but how very fortunate it was that I overtook you as I did!"

I thought so too. Very likely the ultimate loss of the money might have been prevented; but delay, scandal, and annoyance, with probable litigation, were evils almost as bad; and I secretly congratulated myself on the lucky chance of my detention at the Nyeborg ferry. Next morning I crossed without difficulty, and before night-fall was at Copenhagen. Naturally, my thoughts dwelt much on my painful interview with the aged merchant, whose conduct appeared to me admirable. There was, however, one thing about M. Krantz that puzzled me. It seemed to me as if I had seen him before. Not his face. That was wholly unknown to me, but his figure: that tall, erect, and yet supple form, with rather a peculiar carriage of the head. It seemed strangely familiar to me, especially when the merchant had flung his cloak round him before stepping into his carriage. I perplexed myself on this score for some time.

On the day following I called at a bank which the old merchant had recommended, and found, as I had expected, the names of Krantz and Co. a sufficient introduction. My Danish notes were duly exchanged for good bills on London, and for crisp promises to pay on the part of the Old Lady of Threadneedle-street. I found the bankers remarkably courteous and communicative, and we parted very good friends, and I strolled up and down the streets for a while, gazing at the shop windows, full of curious ornaments and quaint objects from Iceland, Sweden, and Russia; at the fisherfolk, gorgeous in blue and red and white, and resplendent in gilt frontlets and jewelled earrings; at the rosy lasses from the Scandinavian mainland, in their scarlet bodices and high caps, staring with round-eyed curiosity on the splendours of what seemed to them a

wonderful city, and chattering volubly to each other in Norse or Swedish as they trotted past with their milk-pails. But I was not long allowed to play the part of a passive spectator.

I was in a glove-shop, buying a pair of number eights of the so-called Swedish kid, under the patronage of a smiling gloveress, whose knowledge of English did not extend beyond the words, "yes, very well," when I heard a sound of running, and a clamour of voices, and I looked out into the street. My appearance was greeted with a shout of "The Englishman himself!"

One of the clerks from the bank I had so lately left, breathless, flushed, and without his hat, rushed in and caught me by the collar. At his heels were several other men, porters and messengers of the bank, most likely, but they were accompanied by two policemen in uniform, who followed the clerk's example in grasping me roughly, gruffly uttering the words, "In the name of the king and the law."

"Are you all mad? Let me go, you blockheads, or you will repent this," cried I, angry though amazed. I shook them off for a moment, but only to be clutched by so many strong hands that resistance was impossible, and I was dragged, with torn coat and disordered cravat, in ignominious procession down the street, the object of hooting from the crowd that rapidly assembled. The abusive epithet most frequently repeated was "Schwindler," and this was intelligible enough, though why it should be applied to my unlucky self was a mystery. The mystery was soon cleared up. I was dragged into the bank, and confronted with the bankers. The good-humoured partners looked wrathful enough now. On the counter lay a heap of notes, and I was sternly asked whether I denied having paid in these notes less than an hour before? I took a glance at the numbers. The fact was undeniable. I admitted it.

"You hear him? He confesses. He owns to being the man who passed off these forged notes," cried the banker, looking round on the assembly; "after that, he may be taken before the Correctional Tribunal at once."

"Forged notes! You do not surely mean—"

I began, but I grew quite faint and sick, and I could not continue. They took my silence for a proof of guilt, and no wonder! I was taken before a commissary, or some such personage, then before a judge of instruction, and was fully committed for trial. That the notes I had paid in were forgeries, there was no doubt. All experts, including a clerk from the government bank, were unanimous on that head. In vain, rallying my bewildered faculties, I begged for a private interview with the judge, unwilling to tell the open court how and why I had received the notes, and to suggest the only conjecture that appeared possible to me: namely, that by some strange mistake the fictitious bank-paper had, for the second time, been put up in my pocket-book. Refused this, I could merely declare that I had received the

notes from the hand of M. Jorn Krantz, head of the respected firm of Krantz and Co., and being asked where, was obliged to own that it was at Nyeborg ferry, whither he had followed me on "urgent private affairs."

This lame explanation was treated with very natural contempt. I was bullied, browbeaten, and urged to confess that I was an accomplice of a certain notorious gang of foreign scroos then infesting Denmark, whose audacity was well known. Unfortunately, I could furnish no proofs of my respectability, for my papers were all on board the Emma, even the vouchers, &c., having been left with Paul Krantz, in a sealed envelope, to be given to Captain Brown at his next visit. The telegraph was not yet in existence between Copenhagen and Kiel. I had no help for it but to go to prison, and to prison I went. Bitter and melancholy enough my reflections were during the five ensuing days. Danish prisons, like all else in Denmark, are clean and neat, and I was not harshly treated, but I met with no sympathy. The magistrates who examined me, the jailers, the chaplain, the very English sub whom I teased by repeated letters to the British Consulate and Legation into paying me a reluctant visit, all believed me a scoundrel of the deepest dye, and took my unvarnished tale for a clumsy invention. I wrote urgently both to the Krantz family and to Captain Brown, but had received no reply when the day for my trial arrived.

"You will be put to the bar along with your captain, it seems," said the turnkey, as he summoned me to come forth, as the judges were awaiting me.

"My captain?"

"I mean," said the turnkey, contemptuously sneering at my apparent hypocrisy, "I mean your head rascal—Klopstok, the swindler—just caught."

In a few moments I passed into the crowded court, and was thrust into a sort of coop, or dock, in which stood a tall man, a prisoner like myself. I could not repress a cry of astonishment. This man, Klopstok, was no other than the aged merchant, old M. Krantz, who had held so important a conference with me at the Nyeborg ferry. True, the grey hair that had given him a false look of venerable age was gone, and in its stead appeared a short grizzled shock of coarse black, while the gold-rimmed glasses no longer shaded the cunning dark eyes that leered at judge and jury, witness, and fellow-prisoner, with the consummate effrontery of one who knew that he had nothing for it but to put a bold face on the matter. He greeted me with a nod and a grin.

Before I recovered from my surprise, to my great joy I saw friendly faces and heard kind voices, and M. Paul Krantz, accompanied by Captain Brown, and by a benevolent-looking

white-haired old gentleman, whom he introduced as his father, the true Jorn Krantz, as half Copenhagen could testify, came bustling into court to speak to my respectability, and to explain the mistake.

I was liberated, and the good Danes seemed to be as sorry for the rough treatment I had experienced as if it had been really incumbent on them to recognise my honesty when appearances were so terribly against me. To do Klopstok—alias Bernard, alias Orlemann—justice, he did not attempt to deny the trick he had played me: certain as he now was, that he could not escape punishment on the ground of his almost innumerable frauds. This man, a Russian by birth, was the chief of that gang of swindlers, of whose daring Paul Krantz had spoken to me at Kiel. He it was, who, on the arrival of the Emma, had contrived to worm out, by means of interrogating one of the mates whom he met at a wharf-side tavern, my business in Denmark. He, too, in the disguise of a Baltic mariner, had dogged me to the Krantz mansion, and had seen, through the window, in what currency I was paid the large sum due to Hallett and Jones, of which he resolved to possess himself. My quick departure somewhat disconcerted him, but his ready wit had devised a plan for turning even that to profit, and he had followed me post haste, to personate the part of an afflicted father, and to delude me into exchanging good notes for forged ones: a scheme in which he had but too well succeeded.

By great good fortune, the swindler had been captured with my money still on his person, and as both I and Paul Krantz—who, I need hardly say, had been basely maligned, and was neither gambler nor knave, but one of the best of good fellows—had a list of the numbers, the judges ordered the property of Hallett and Jones to be restored to me; and the bankers, who were profuse in their apologies, were also saved from loss. Before I left Copenhagen, Herr Klopstok was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. I think, however, he must have escaped, for, during a recent trip to the French dockyards and arsenals, I could take my oath I saw him in a suit of party-coloured serge, in irons, on the deck of a French frigate, bound for Cayenne.

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